

# Hooked Rugs

## and How to make them



*Anna M. Laise Phillips*

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# Hooked Rugs and How to Make Them

By  
Anna M. Laise Phillips

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IT IS WITH SINCERE APPRE-  
CIATION THAT THIS BOOK IS  
LOVINGLY DEDICATED TO THOSE  
WHO HAVE BEEN MOST INSTRU-  
MENTAL IN AWAKENING THE  
AUTHOR TO THE SUBJECT OF  
AMERICAN HAND-MADE RUGS:

E. M.

HER FIRST WORKER, OF  
REVERED MEMORY, AND

E V. H.

WHOSE EARLY, VITAL ENCOUR-  
AGEMENT HAS HELPED MORE  
THAN SHE CAN EVER REALIZE.



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## FOREWORD

*Out of darkness cometh light, out of chaos cometh order, after sorrow cometh joy.*

SOMETIMES I wonder if the thing itself is as big or as important as the reason for its being; and in view of the darkness and dawn, the chaos and then the order, the trials and then the joy of our work, it seems that the things we do are but the outlet of our inner selves. We grope in darkness and then suddenly over our world comes a light, softly stealing away all the shadows. We may remain in the spot where once it was dark, yet just because of a little thing, a circumstance, perhaps, that place is forever glorified and black darkness is forgotten in the light of a new activity.

Chaos, our unanchored minds in restless bodies, too disappears, and its antonym, order, Heaven's primary law, reigns. Light and order banish sorrow and worry and lo, in the twinkling of an eye, the opening of a door, the entrance of a friend, joy and happiness and hope are made possible. They become realities through the magic thing that has many, indeed

innumerable, ways of expressing itself, yet may be summed up in one word—work. Whether we labor with our backs bent to an arduous task or with intellect aided by our eyes and our hands, there is within us the power to make our lives and the lives of those around us bright and happy because we work.

Satan provides some mischief always for the idle, and yet some dear souls find themselves wishing for pleasant incidental work that may be done without giving up or neglecting the duties, and at the same time, let us hope, the pleasures of homely occupations. Scattered all over this broad land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the frozen inlets and broad plains of Canada down through our own original thirteen states and on to those that later became a part of our United States, are homes where women attend to their household duties systematically and conscientiously, yet they have their leisure hours when they might be doing some other form of expressive work if they could only decide what to take up. Or having decided, for example, that they would like to possess a lovely hooked rug, they do not know how simple and yet delightfully interesting this home work really is.

Many women whose ancestors were dexterous

rug makers have allowed the art to slumber, and it is hoped that the readers of this book may awake to new light and joy, and that they may realize that from little inconsequential things come great results, not alone in the things created or made, but in the coming of light, order, and joy to the worker. Yet all who read about hand-made rugs will not make them, but it is hoped that all may see in these inanimate mats the hands and brains and hearts of the workers who fashioned them with such care.

There are rug makers and also rug collectors, those who treasure that which others have made, and because the two are wide apart and unacquainted I wish to tell the story of my own initial interest in hooked and other hand-made rugs. The tale centers and hinges and revolves on a rug maker and a rug collector—two women:

“And never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently  
at God’s great Judgment Seat.”

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE WORKER

One bleak December day, trudging over a brownish yellow road that seemed more tawny,

perhaps, by contrast with the snow-capped Alleghenies and the Brush Mountain spur of the range off in the distance, my heart was in accord with the bleakness of my surroundings. Particularly so because the road I was treading led up to the old cemetery where some of my own people, kin folks and friends, were buried. The shrill whistle of the powerful locomotives drawing a passenger train around the Horse Shoe Curve a few miles across the valley waked me from my reverie.

Looking up I found myself in front of a plank house, one of those unfinished homes that shriek the tale of their semidilapidation at all who pass by. The brick casing that was intended to transform it into a comfortable and good-looking dwelling had never been put on. Hard times caught the owner without sufficient funds to complete it, and as I turned in at the half-open gate and approached the front door, I saw that a box served the purpose of a step. But ere I had time for further observation of the exterior, the door was opened by a big, motherly woman. She welcomed me—hearty and kindly in her greeting, sweet and quiet in manner. She apologized for taking me on through the unheated front room and into the kitchen, where her husband,



half ill and no longer young, was sitting by the cook stove in which a low fire was burning.

"Indeed, I can make rugs and I work fast, too. If you'll let me make you one I am sure you'll be pleased."

My precious worker!

She was so earnest, so insistent on getting something to do, for she said her husband had not worked for a year, and times were hard. Hospitably she offered me a cup of tea and some dainty bread-and-butter sandwiches, and as I was leaving she pressed a big red apple into my hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

How different the yellow-brown road seemed! It was no longer tawny, but its windings gleamed as if strewn with gold. Somehow the worker's sweetness had changed my day. My quiet visit to that humble home was more important to me and to the worker than either of us knew then.

Before the first rug was finished the business that had taken me back to the scenes of childhood was completed and I returned to New York. Soon the rug my worker made for me came by mail and it was so lovely that I praised her as she deserved, for over its surface were scattered morning glories and marigolds that

had been wrought in a mountain kitchen during midwinter. Others followed steadily every week, for the worker had passed the good word along to her neighbors. They had little rug parties where two or three gathered and visited in just the same fashion that folks gathered to make rugs in colonial and other days that have passed into history.

The rugs came and each was in itself a masterpiece of handcraft, but as I had asked my worker to send the first one to be paid for on delivery, and those that followed came the same way, I began to wonder how I was going to stop the influx of hooked rugs and the outpouring of the contents of my none too fat purse. Diplomatically I wrote my worker that, while they were all beautiful and well made, I really could not afford to buy so many, and quickly came the answer to that letter—an answer that is the keynote to everything I have had to do along this line—both in encouraging that group of workers and by voice and pen in trying to create an interest in the revival of the art of rug making.

My worker's message said, "Please, Mrs. Phillips, don't stop buying our rugs. You are keeping the coal shovel and the bread knife going."

I didn't stop.

Nor did my worker and the group of women who hooked rugs under her direction. For a year she worked and fashioned bits of cotton and wool, with here and there a thread of silk, into rugs from her own designs. Then the contagion of her prosperity and joy reflected itself, and her husband, having recovered his health, secured a position that promised enough to permit my worker to ease up a bit. With the coming of the following New Year, however, her tired hands ceased their earthly labors and she passed to her reward leaving not only beautiful reminders of her art and industry, but to me and to those who knew her better than I, the imprint of a splendid and beautiful character. From the humble, unfinished house by the side of the yellow road emerged things that brighten today other homes in the metropolis and in the country. Families whose names are synonymous with wealth and power prize the handcraft of My Worker.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE COLLECTOR

When I had enough rugs to make a small exhibition I was fortunate in showing them at

the Art Center in New York. Just a few nice pieces—none of them marvellous, but all of them showing that this group of women, whose mothers and grandmothers, too, had made good rugs before them, deserved to be encouraged.

The first rug sold went to a woman who delights in showing her appreciation of sincere work of any constructive kind. When the exhibition was over she ordered other rugs, and thus the "bread knife" and the "coal shovel" were kept going through the good will, the kindness, and the patronage of The Collector.

It is, then, with sincere appreciation that this book is dedicated to the two who have been most instrumental in awakening the author to the subject of American hand-made rugs: the worker and the collector.

Personally I know of no other handcraft that has in it so much of human interest, so much of the personal equation, as American hand-made rugs. Their influence, too, seems sweet and gracious. Those who construct them are without exception, so far as my own experience goes, the kind of folks one loves and trusts; and those who gather them into their homes also are people of refinement and good taste.

It is a real joy, then, to be the means of bringing others into this community of workers and users of American hand-made rugs.

ANNA M. LAISE PHILLIPS

Ye Hearthstone Studios  
New York City.



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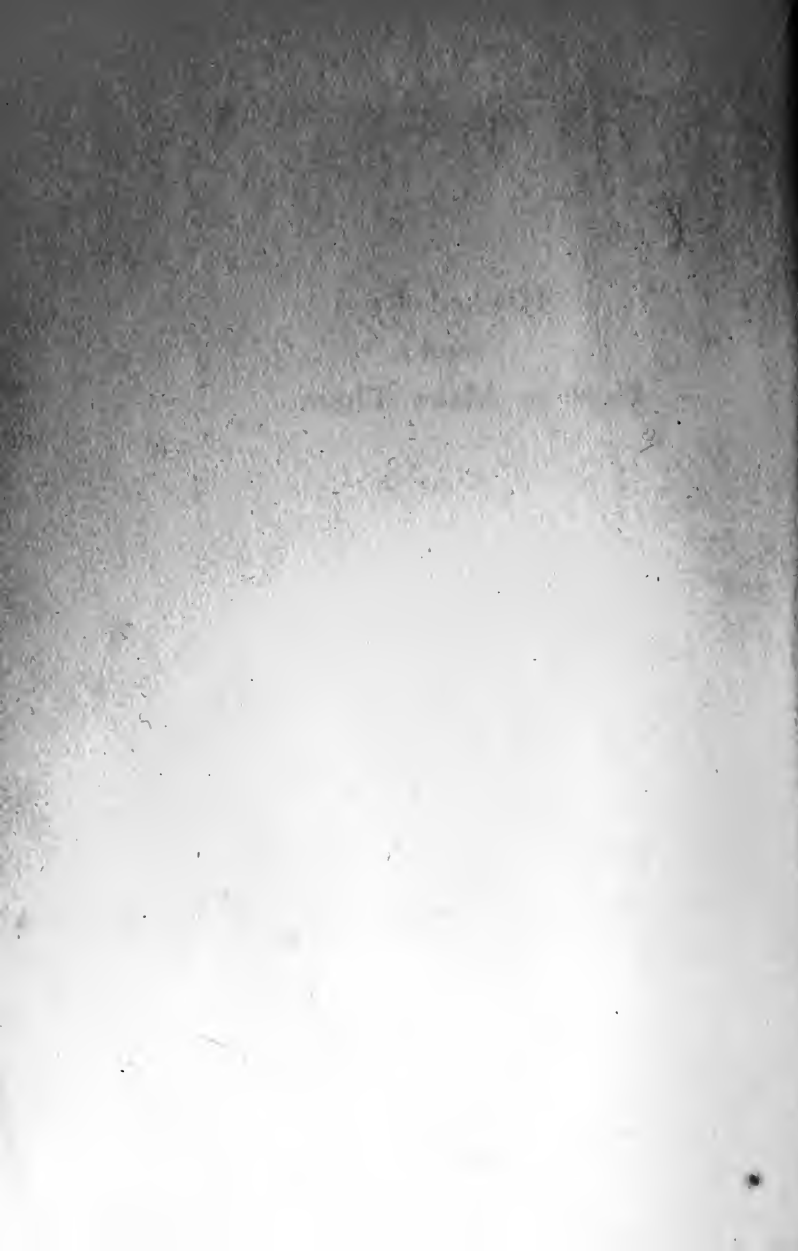


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and  
How to Make Them**





### A CORNER IN THE AUTHOR'S HOME

#### YE HEARTHSTONE STUDIOS

Showing some of the Hooked Rugs in the author's possession.

This embossed carpet in pastel shades on a tan and elephant-colored background has the flowers molded an inch above the surface. The small rug in the foreground matches the carpet. Under the window is a Star of the Sea embossed mat.

On the wall is the "Vermont Union" shown in detail on next Plate.



THE VERMONT UNION RUG

This picture rug, known as the "Vermont Union," is a delightful hooked rug with an historic appeal. The eagle flying over land and sea bears in its talons the shield with fourteen stars, indicative of the admission of Vermont in 1791.

## CHAPTER I

### HOOKED RUGS OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

"Sing a song of sixpence,  
Pocket full o' rye,  
Four and twenty blackbirds  
Baked in a pie;  
When the pie was opened,  
The birds began to sing,  
Wasn't that a dainty dish  
To set before the king?"

**R**HYMES and bits of whimsical folk-lore jingles come to mind when we see a lovely old hooked rug or its younger lineal descendant just from the frame of its interesting and industrious maker. "When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing," birds of memory that carry us back to the twilight of other days and into the dawn of the present.

Since the World War we have had a new, a different, existence. The hands of our clocks run on and time is marked just as it used to be in the days when hooked rugs were first made and treasured. Yet withal there is a difference in our lives, a difference in our thoughts, and a difference in our mode of living. As a nation,

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notwithstanding the advance of science, of means of travel and of instantaneous communication, of labor-saving inventions, and the right of women to vote and hold office equally with men, we are yet unconsciously turning back to grandma's days.

Why?

Blessings brighten as they pass. When we were children we resented the mid-Victorian furniture, the old-fashioned cherry chest of drawers with its glass knobs, and the hand-patched quilts that covered us at night. What do we think of these things today? Who does not find somewhere in the inner consciousness that thrill that gives birth to covetousness when we see an old-fashioned brass candlestick, dented and bent, perhaps, but still beautiful? What is it that makes us wish it were ours? Is it for its beauty alone? I think not. It is because it is a key to the door of history and of romance. It makes us think, and if candles and old china and glass, things made in factories and turned out in comparatively large quantities at the time of their manufacture long ago, start us mooning, what a mint of infinite pleasure may be found in an old hooked rug. Human interest lies imbedded in every stitch, and grows, and glows, and scintillates, giving sub-



## Hooked Rugs of Yesterday and Today 25

ject for thought and bringing to us memories of other days.

In fancy we see again industrious hands drawing in the pattern by the light of a tallow candle or a kerosene lamp, and our own electric lights blink and blink, and ere we are aware of it the spell is on us. Our own troubles and worries fade, and with our rugs and their makers we find ourselves in a fairy world, beautiful because it is a dream, a fantasy, but a bright and happy experience. We see the bits of color expand and the petal of a rose becomes the face of a young girl in quaint costume working, mayhap, on a rug for her dower chest. Then as the picture evolves, we see her youthful hopes realized and she becomes a matron with all a matron's cares. Later, as grandmamma, we see her industriously threading the design of autumn leaves into a hearthstone rug for posterity.

Why do we love soft-toned old rag rugs?

Is it not because they are fascinating in themselves, and they take us away from the hurry and bustle of today and start a train of thought that is new because it is old?

The origin of American hooked rugs is wrapped in a veil of mystery. True, we get occasional glimpses of what seems to be the

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germ from which they grew, but looking closely we find that our trail leads us up and down our colonies and into the hills and dales of our original thirteen states, until we give up our search for data based on fact, we pause to admire the specimens we have collected.

Hooked rugs have been made in the past, they are being made today, and we hope that they will continue to be made in the future. Our floors in the past were covered with them, today we have some old ones and a few new ones, and in the future the old ones will be supplanted by those of later make if the work of reviving this form of handicraft is successfully continued. Far more interesting than the date of the making of the first hooked rug is a study of the good rugs of an early period, with the idea of emulating the industry and patience which wrought the rare and fine examples of old hooked rugs yet remaining.

Many times we blindly fall back upon tradition and quote unverified statements regarding hooked rugs, so that it seems wise to use our reason in making a few deductions from what we know about these precious relics rather than to admire blindly an atrocity simply because somebody said it was of Revolutionary or mayhap of pre-Revolutionary period.

While a few rag rugs may have been made in the earliest colonial days, few if any of them remain for us to admire and to examine. If the rough floors of the colonial farmers' cottages were covered at all, the mats used were undoubtedly the skins of animals that had roamed wild in the vicinity; bears in the northern and north central states predominated, and deer and sheep skins, too, must have been used before the open fireplaces and at the side of beds.

When civilization advanced and wild game receded into the wildernesses beyond, communities grew to larger proportions, cities were the outgrowth of hamlets, and naturally stores sprang up and prospered. These offered floor coverings for those who could afford to buy the few foreign-made carpets exhibited, and the women-folk in the humbler homes who began to feel the longing to possess something with color and design with which to cover their floors, set about planning how copies of the beautiful carpets of their wealthier neighbors might be made in their own homes.

Just where or under what circumstances the first hooked rug was made would be interesting reading, but I have a strong suspicion that the real origin of our present-day hooked rug lies

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overseas. In Scotland many village and farm houses have the floors covered with hooked rugs, "pulled" rugs they are commonly called from the process involved in making them—literally pulling the goods through canvas or other coarse foundation material. England and the rural regions of the entire United Kingdom abound in hooked rugs, some of them quite old and large enough to cover an entire room. This might account for the great interest in the industry in Canada were it not for the fact that many of the Canadian women most skilled in the handcraft are of French extraction, and tradition tells us that French peasants also were dexterous rug makers.

There has been a tendency to refer to our American product as the New England hooked rugs, giving an impression that they were made there only, to the exclusion of other places. As a matter of fact some very old examples of hooked rugs have been found in Pennsylvania, but as New England was settled in 1620 and the Keystone State in 1682, it must be conceded that our New England housewives may have had a little more than a sixty-year start before the Pennsylvania Dutch women took up the craft.

Perhaps the strongest passion of the human

race, covetousness, the desire of housewives to possess for themselves such things as other folks had, was the real cause of the birth, growth, and beauty of the American hooked rug which took the place of the animal skin rugs of settlement and colonial days.

The making of rugs was done in what might have been termed leisure time; the long winter evenings when between the dusk that fell at four in the afternoon and the nine o'clock bed-time hour, hands were busy and minds acutely active in constructing home-made floor coverings. If covetousness were the mother of this art, then is it not logical to conclude that rivalry, the desire to excel in making something better and prettier and more worth while than those already made, had a very strong part in perfecting the hooked rugs of an early day? Competition became the life of the trade, if one may refer to this merely incidental occupation of our American ancestors as a trade.

The small rugs that covered the cracks in the floor where grandma's chair had creaked as she rocked and knitted, grew into coverings that extended from the fireside to the middle of the room and on to the opposite wall, but of course such big rugs were not produced

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during the first few years in which our women made their own floor coverings.

The simplest kind of rag rugs were made by sewing the pieces of good parts, or at least the less worn parts, of cast-off clothing on to a gunny sack, putting the longest pieces in the center and the smaller ones at the outside. There are some very old rugs made in this way; that is, appliquéd to homespun linen, each row of pieces overlapping the other, thus making a warm mat from what would otherwise have been useless, half-worn patches. Later, this form of rug was decorated with stitches of wool by using the short lengths left from the woven coverlets and other household and wearable articles.

The dye pot was as much a part of the kitchen equipment as is the stove today, and beautiful colors were obtained from barks, roots, and herbs brewed and combined to make the desired tint. Vegetable dyes were used, some of them grown in the garden; saffron for example, from which a brilliant golden color is obtained, was raised primarily because saffron tea was said to be efficacious in breaking up a cold and in reducing a fever. Logwood, onion skins, and other vegetable dyes colored the sheep's wool for the family wardrobe, and later these and

many other dyes brought bright spots into the early hooked rugs.

The carpets brought to the Western Hemisphere from Europe and the Orient were made in rather intricate designs. The French carpets with bold florals, garlands, and wreaths were naturally the possessions of the wealthy, but their designs were imitated by the ambitious home rug makers and many of our early American hooked rugs show traces of the patterns found in old carpets.

This is particularly true of the rugs made in our central states. Philadelphia was the mecca of the merchants who in early days went east once a year to buy goods. While admiring the small stock of these rare and expensive luxuries, generally ordered by a wealthy customer, Mistress Beitleman and her neighbor Martha Simpson, spinster, and well-to-do, saw the possibilities of making for their own parlors and bed chambers nice soft rugs very similar in design, and coloring easily duplicated by dexterously dipping their materials into the dye pot. Each set to work on her delightful task and each succeeded in her own way, a very good way, and as she painstakingly drew her design with a piece of charcoal on the homespun linen or the piece of burlap that had

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once been a bag, she felt the same kind of thrills and joys and expectations that come to us today as we design and execute things of beauty and utility.

When her work was completed Mistress Beitleman compared notes with Miss Simpson, and later both rugs were displayed at quilting parties and apple-butter boilings, and what Mistress Beitleman and Martha Simpson, spinster, did for themselves, their neighbors imitated and enlarged upon with many variations.

Domestic life began to be portrayed and the house tabby was pictured early in the rug-making era. A delightful example of *genre* or home life is shown in an old hooked rug. Here we see Maria, see her double, in fact, with a wonderful bow tied under her chin and her red mouth literally laughing in feline glee over her conspicuous position in the center of truly colonial yellow fields, broken at the corners by the acorns that seem to point out more emphatically than necessarily, pussy's proud position. In the central panel on a stone-gray ground is a prim plant in a black bowl or pot which might masquerade as a Jerusalem cherry, that much loved plant of grandma's days, or a tea rose. It matters little what the flower



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may be, suffice to note that this rug which was said to be of Revolutionary period is quaint, and soft, and lovely, and childlike in its design. Possibly a child who loved Maria rigged her up in her own nice blue hair ribbon and then painstakingly drew her so well that mother, just ready to put a rug in the frame, cut out the silhouette of the pretty kitty, using heavy paper and applied the outline to her canvas, duplicating the design for the other side. Revolutionary? Well, maybe, but probably not Revolutionary War period, just a revolution of the paper pattern, and because it is quaint and the straight line border and panels carry the color of the old gray stone house that tabby and her mistress called home, is not sufficient argument to claim unreasonable age for it. It is a good rug, old or new, and its clipped surface came from the modern cleaners soft and velvety, and with but little trace of wear.

If the inland towns of Pennsylvania and adjacent states gave birth to home-life scenes in rugs, or if the designs of floral-decked European carpets served as models for the thrifty rug makers in those states, the coast-wise settlements and communities where seafaring was the source of income for the family, naturally gave a salty flavor to the rugs made there.

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Designs of ships, clocks, and compasses were often found on old New England rugs. Of such origin is one very delightful old rug showing a ship's compass as a center motif and the moon, stars, and signs of the zodiac besprinkling the crazy-quilt border. Had these nautical emblems been placed on a different border, one would not be skeptical when one reads the tag on the rug that says "the rug was made on a little island off the coast of Maine by the wife of a seafaring man about 1840."

Now it is a patent fact that the crazy-quilt designs were wrought very largely in the eighties, but some inventive genius may have been the pioneer designer away back forty years earlier. Who knows? Forty years hence the rug will be actually as old as it is said to be today, and just as lovely if it is cared for properly. If it is not, it will have passed into oblivion; but even then the memory of those rare colors, that mingling of sunset purple and rose that speaks of the dawn of a beautiful day, will live, and the little piece of handwork will have served a worth-while existence because it has given joy to those who came in contact with it.

Another early American rug that rings of romance and the sea is the Bride's Welcome mat with two love birds in one long drawn out

kiss of affection, or shall we say drawn in, since it is a hooked rug. We can see those birdlets being presented to some sweet young Puritan maiden years ago by her husky seafaring lover. In memory of the occasion it is quite possible that Aunt Jane drew them into a little design on a sprig of a tree with sky blue mottled background, adding the word "welcome" underneath in dainty pink letters. That little mat may have been designed for the threshold, but it is a safe guess that it has never been trodden upon. What heartless wretch would trample on two love birds? It simply is impossible, and it is more likely that the rug was wrapped in paper and that it reposed in a treasure chest until a few years ago. To carry the romance further, the lover may never have returned from the sea, his ship may have been lost, and his bride-elect, heartbroken, may rest in an early New England grave. Whatever the story, this little rug is today a treasured wall hanging, beautiful in sentiment, in coloring, and in execution.

Of such is the warp and woof of hooked rugs. Fact and fancy, prosaic moods and idealistic whims, suggest subjects stamped or drawn on homespun or canvas, which today tell us something of the life and character, the aims, aspira-

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tions, and loves of the makers and their associates. Some of these rugs are fine enough in sentiment and workmanship to be called the American tapestries of other days, whether the rugs were made in the dim past, the early years of the last century, or but a few decades ago.

There is a charm and worth in the old-time rugs that give valuable ideas to our workers today. We may make rugs from whatever odds and ends we may have at hand, but the designs and methods of an age that has passed may well be perpetuated. The Rodier family, master weavers of France, have a scrap book worth thousands of dollars. This book is made up of bits of fabric recovered by the rag pickers of Paris, and serves as documentation for some of the most beautiful of modern textiles. So, too, our old rugs and even bits of them show our modern rug makers what has already been accomplished through the medium of what others have thrown away.

## CHAPTER II

### SENTIMENT AND SYMBOLS IN HOOKED RUGS

LIKE tapestries, embroideries, and prints, hooked rugs vary in both texture and design. Wide as is the scope of the patterns that have been drawn into the hooked rug, it may seem a bit unusual to state that the way they are drawn in, or the texture of the rug, is just as varied, but since the design of a rug is more outstanding than its texture, let us consider first a few of the kinds of rugs that our ancestors made and that their descendants are copying today.

In making a rug as in painting a picture there is the element of personal preference; in short, our likes, the things we admire, are those that are chosen to be represented. I think to a large extent this accounts for the many floral patterns in the rugs of other days. What the movies mean as a diversion to some folks today, a revelling in the old-fashioned flower garden was to the women of yesteryear. Hollyhocks and bluebells, and other garden flowers of

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many kinds and colors, were the joy and pride of the rural homemaker. It was but natural, then, that the flowers so carefully planted and tenderly nurtured during the summer should be held in loving memory in the gray winter days when snow covered the ground, the hills, and the fields, and the never idle hands turned to creating beautiful things.

The most popular flower, the rose, has perhaps the largest representation in our old hooked rugs. Great big red roses, the kind produced now only by the most careful gardener, were drawn in, crudely perhaps, but with faithfulness as to richness of color and size, and the artist who laid out a flower garden and cared for it in the summer was the artist who hooked her conception of its beauty through the canvas of the rug in the frame.

Nor was there monotony in the floral designs. The leading color may have been red, and the madder dye pot yielded color equally as rich as that of the original flower, but too much red would have marred the harmony of the rose picture, so the color was lightened with a mixture of soft pinks made by simply diluting the original coloring matter to daintier shades. What was done with the flowers was also

accomplished in reproducing the greens of the foliage. The effect of a bit of sunlight was given by drawing in yellow with the green, while the shadows merged themselves from the deep forest green into the hazy grayish tones that create an impression of distance. Notwithstanding all this display of artistic talent, some have called our early American floral rugs "crude." The question arises whether they were crude or whether their tendency was modern in giving us a foretaste of the impressionistic school while eliminating its crudities.

To the thinking student of this type of early American form of floor covering, comes the deduction that garden and house plants only were represented, except in very rare instances. Wild flowers and weeds were seldom thought of sufficient importance to be perpetuated. If a sunflower or goldenrod design is seen in a hooked rug, even though that rug be frayed and worn, the chances are that it is a modern product, for in the old days sunflowers grew near the chicken coop where the falling seeds were quickly picked up by the fowls as choice morsels of food, and goldenrod was considered what it really is, a weed. House plants and the more delicate garden flowers were occasionally shown, and we find fuchsias, verbenas,

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geraniums, and morning glories scattered over the surfaces of many of our early hooked rugs.

### GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

To associate a simple hooked rug with geometry, an accurate science, does seem a little far fetched, yet some of the best old as well as modern hooked rugs are of geometric design. They were not accurate, but they carried the thought of a repetition of certain angles or circles. If mother's hands drew in the roses and leaves of the floral rug, the geometric pattern was quite as likely to be the work of father or son Johnny, and in this the yardstick and the dinner plate played an important part, together with a scissors and a good stiff paper pattern.

Let us take for instance the scroll designs so popular in many of the New England and Canadian hooked rugs. These were formed by deftly cutting the pattern from stiff paper, later tracing the design on cardboard, cutting it out, and again tracing it on to the homespun or burlap which forms the foundation.

Many of the geometric hooked rugs are irregular as to outline, due to the fact that the soft homespun or burlap did not stay in place while the lines were being drawn on it. We



frequently find rugs showing a diamond pattern border with but few of the diamonds of equal size, yet this very irregularity in drawing gives the rug a quaint hand-made quality that adds to, rather than detracts from, its charm. Florals and geometrics were sometimes combined.

When oilcloth and wallpaper came into somewhat common use, housewives copied the patterns and preserved their favorite designs by using them in rugs, sometimes creating new patterns and combinations by working out a color scheme of harmonizing shades or contrasting tones.

#### WELCOME MATS AND EMBLEMATIC RUGS

The general impression has gone out that the age of our rug-making ancestors was an unemotional one, that the trim, straight-backed chairs and the hard-seated sofas did not lend themselves to sentiment or romance. It is true that during the more primitive days of our country there was but little time for the elaborate expression of the finer sentiments that make for pleasure and happiness, and there was little if any of the luxury that is so abundant today. Yet human nature in the eighteenth century and during the early Vic-

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torian age was just about what human nature always was and always will be. The form of expression may have differed, but the thought back of it—the impulse that prompted the expression—was nothing more nor less than natural and human. Our ancestors worked hard because they found it necessary in order to conquer conditions, but that does not mean that they did not love whole-heartedly just as normal folks do today, nor that they closed their eyes to beauty, or allowed their aspirations to become dulled.

By no means!

Hooked rugs, even those made in straight lines and somber colors, often expressed the sentimental feelings of the makers. When it came to the display of hospitality there never has been a more subtle, more kindly welcome extended to a guest than that which emanated from the semicircular rugs placed just inside the front door with the word Welcome nestling amidst a bed of flowers or scrolled in front of the picture of a pet dog or cat saying, literally and figuratively, "I bid you welcome, and am so glad to see you that I scatter my treasures in your path."

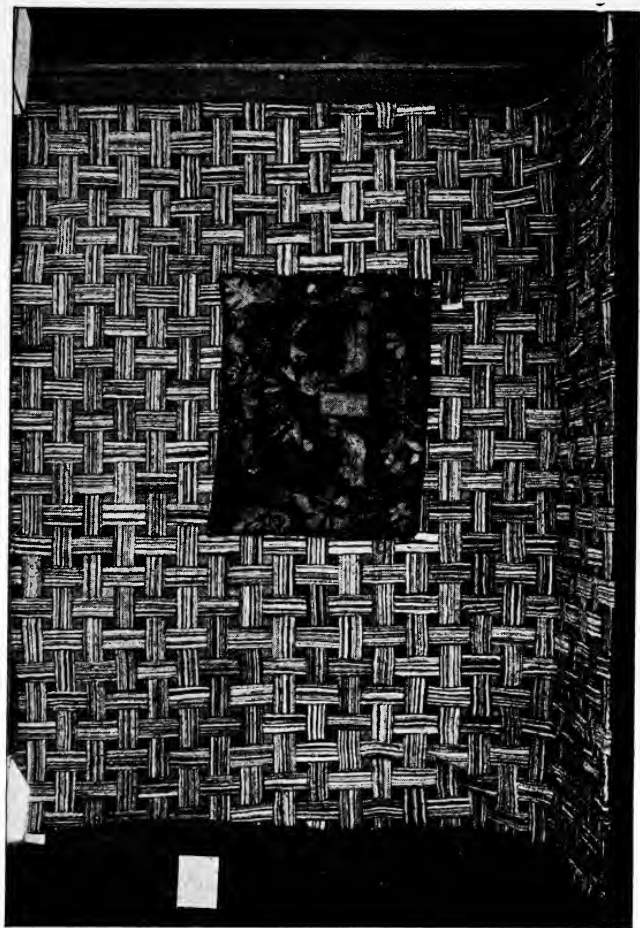
Now it is quite true that the busy and practical American housewife would scarcely have

# WITHDRAWN



WELCOME MAT

This really old Welcome mat has been copied again and again. Benign mother cat and frisky, straight-tailed Kitty are favorite subjects for hooked rug makers today.



### TWO CONTRASTING RUGS

Here are reproduced two very different kinds of hooked rugs. The large rug, recently made for a New England home, is four yards square. The colors are dregs of wine, shaded greens, and tans. The smaller rug is an antique symbolic rug, "Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity."

unbent enough to say these words, but the thought of them was shown when she designed her rugs and was held sincerely, although in a sense subconsciously, as she executed the pattern stitch by stitch. With all the thought of beauty and sentiment that is back of these Welcome mats there is yet the practical use for which they were designed. They were generally of very heavy texture and deep pile, hooked closely so as to withstand hard wear and to protect the larger rug or carpet. Like other forms of hooked rugs these threshold mats were both decorative and useful.

Patriotism, too, found expression in the rugs of our ancestors, and in these the flag and the eagle predominate. The rug shown in our illustration has an historical as well as an emblematic value, and is known as the Vermont Union Rug, the fourteen stars in the shield indicating the admission of Vermont which took place in 1791.

Another form of emblematic rug is found in our Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity design. Two white doves flanking a bouquet of roses in a vase, and some luscious looking red apples were used as the symbols; the doves for peace, the flowers for happiness, and the fruit for prosperity.

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Still another symbol is the Horn of Plenty which is frequently found in old rugs, while a more modern adaptation comes in a rug with a horseshoe in the center and four-leaf clovers scattered over the surface.

These are but a few of the combinations that form this type of old-time rug. I cannot pass from this subject, however, without referring to the Valentine rugs occasionally found in old collections. In these, very naturally, hearts and love's arrows are the predominating features in combination with geometric and floral patterns.

### PICTURE RUGS

There would be no question as to whether a hooked rug with a design of an automobile or an aeroplane on it was antique or modern. Yet a worn-out picture rug with a winding path leading up to a little cottage, a well with the old oaken bucket, and a rambling barn off in the distance might be quite as modern as one representing an aeroplane. The chances are, however, that a rug which shows wear, a rug with faded colors and frayed edges, depicting a scene of home life or farm life, has not been made recently.

Just as the floral hooked rug indicated that

its maker loved the garden flowers and shrubs, so the picture rug tells the story of its maker's fanciful conceptions rendered with a realism sometimes only too discernible.

It was the descendant of the occupant of a thatched cottage in Normandy, whose fancy, carrying her across the sea for her inspiration, created this lovely scene, old in conception but modern in treatment. Plate No. V. In many cases the composite picture rugs, those showing houses with lawns and household pets, were drawn without much idea of perspective, and the cruder they are the more feeling seemed to be put into their execution. Primitive art is primitive art and outline and color may not conform to rigid rules, but in the matter of old rugs we find a sincerity of thought which far outweighs any mistake the youthful or the mature artist may have made.

It would be impossible to attempt to classify the picture rugs extant. These are among the rare hooked rugs and good specimens should be carefully preserved. An old-time scene with a present-day atmosphere, even when done with painstaking exactness, is not nearly so pleasing as those that reveal the home life of our ancestors. True, some of our rug makers today, by crudely working in the figures regardless of

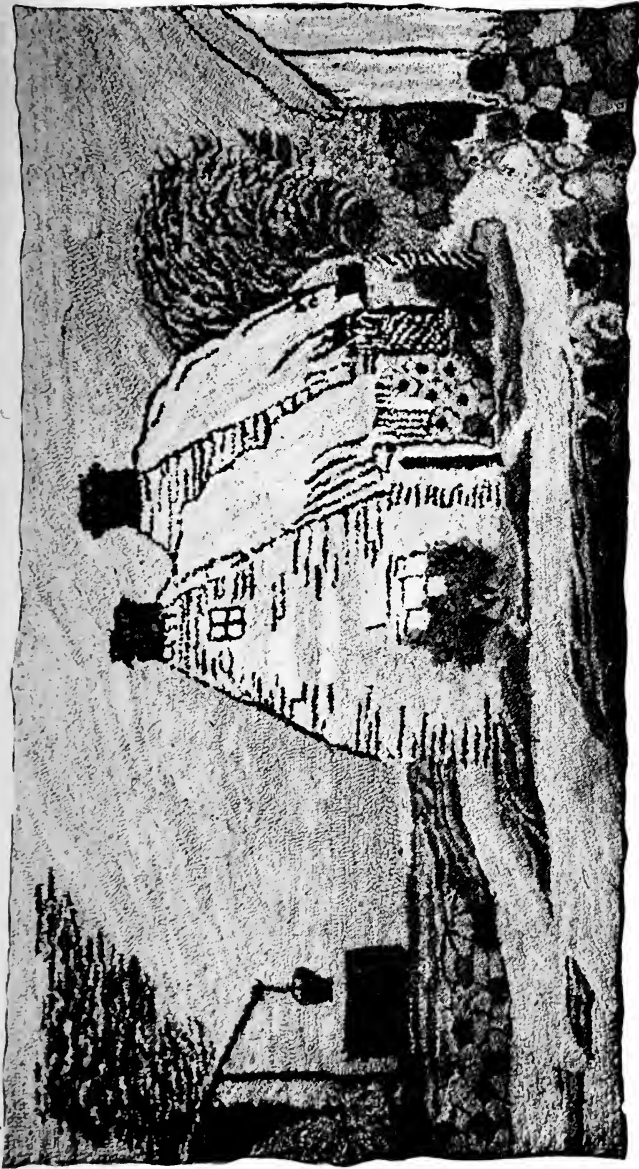
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the laws of perspective, create an atmosphere of long ago. I recall one rug made by an old lady in her eighty-sixth year which showed real old-time feeling. Speaking of the rug as she handed it to me, she said:

"That's my pony; that's Jack, our old black Jack, and that's the field he used to browse in, and that's the sky behind it, and that's the same old fence and the old bars I used to let down when I took the cows to pasture when I was a girl." And except that the rug was new and clean and fresh it was an old-time rug, because the black pony standing in the field or grass with the tumble-down fence in the foreground and the hazy sky in the perspective, gave us a picture that was truly antique, but this was a rare example of modern hooking.

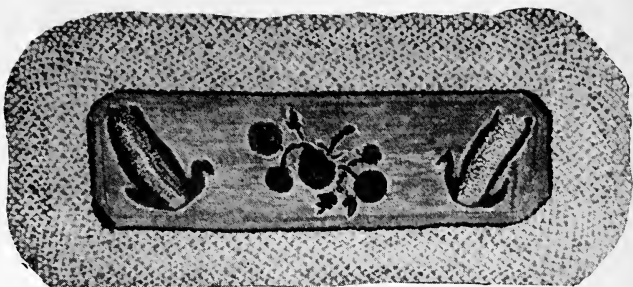
I think, perhaps, a better name than picture rug might be given to this type. They could be called Memory rugs, for many were made from memory, using a particular phase of old-time life as the basis of the design. Simple representations of a log cabin with smoke curling from the chimney, or a part of the barnyard with the house in the distance, or maybe a turnstile leading from the road to the lane; all were perpetuated by people whose memories



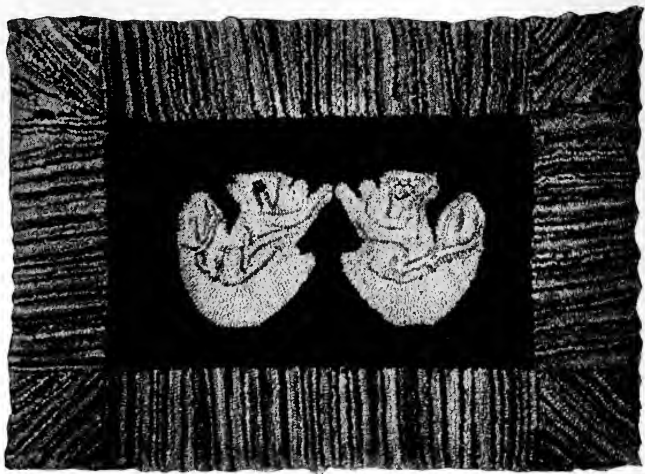


PICTURE RUG

This hooked rug is pleasing in conception and in coloring. Pastel shades of tan, blue and green are brightened by the hollyhocks and geraniums growing near the cottage.



GARDEN DESIGN



ANIMAL RUG

The very old hooked rug with braided border speaks of the garden, for the design of corn and tomatoes in their natural coloring is adroitly arranged.

The lower illustration shows a pair of playful squirrels made by reversing the pattern. Although simple in design this is a typical old-time rug. It is especially pleasing in the nursery.

turned, not to the thing they saw in reality so much as to thoughts of other and perhaps happier days.

#### ANIMAL RUGS

Animal life, both domestic and wild, and with many variations, has been a popular subject for hooked rugs. Cats and dogs have been represented in repose and at play. Tabby striped and Tabby white, Tom black or white or mottled, and numerous kittens of varying colors were painstakingly drawn with a bit of charcoal on to the canvas foundation of many early hooked rugs. Sometimes, lest they should be forgotten by the maker of the rug, the name also was drawn in. Thus we have a black cat on a shaggy grayish brown foundation with the word Billy in red as the only bit of color to relieve the somberness. Another rug shows a cat and her two kittens with the enlightening statement "born, 1886." A cat with kittens playing with a ball has been duplicated again and again and was a favorite subject for the semicircular Welcome mats. Tabby with her mistress' favorite color shown in a prim bow of pink or blue or red, has been reproduced with many variations. Cats awake and cats asleep, cats at play and somber mamma

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cats watching their young, all are to be found in the old hooked rugs.

Although more especially the pet of the men of the house, the dog has a very prominent place in the designs of the early American hooked rugs. Sometimes like the cat he is named, and there have been Rovers and Towers and Tiges posing protectingly near the door or reposing on a mat or a pillow near the fireside; while curly poodles, black and white, are generally shown quietly sleeping on the old-fashioned footstools with their cross-stitch embroidery forming a bright background.

Leaving the farm house for the barn, we find the horse taking first place among the out-of-door domestic animals represented. Large horses and small horses, horses black and horses white, and even prancing horses done in brilliant reds have held the fancy alike of their makers and of those who are the fortunate possessors of them.

In some instances a herd of cattle has been shown grazing peacefully in a pasture; while one particularly interesting rug portrays a farm-yard scene with the horse, the cows, the chickens, and even the pig.

Poultry and bird life have always been pleas-

ant subjects for reproduction in rugs, and some very rare examples of early American hooking show the rooster in all his gay plumage proudly proclaiming himself, as it were, "cock o' the walk," and the rug showing a rooster as big as a horse and a horse as small as a rooster is unique and interesting.

As a matter of fact, while hens have been shown on rugs they are the exception rather than the rule. Ducks and geese, on the contrary, are often found both singly and in groups of three and four. The robin has occasionally been shown, and the canary bird, or probably we should say the salad bird, is not infrequently found in old hooked rugs. Designs of a caged canary I have not seen, and it is quite possible that the kindly souls who formulated the patterns preferred to recall their pets as being free rather than prisoners behind bars.

The seacoast regions of New England have given us a number of tropical-bird reproductions. Gay-plumaged parrots, big macaws, and little love birds, brought most likely from the tropics by the seafaring men of the family, have been pictured in varying degrees of exactness in hooked rugs. The hooting owl in his setting in the moonlight, too, has many versions

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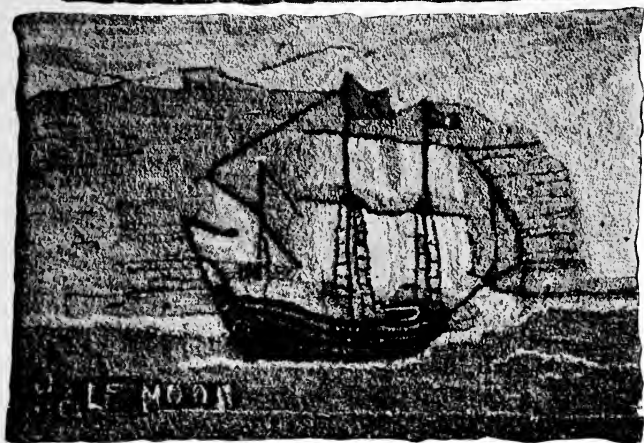
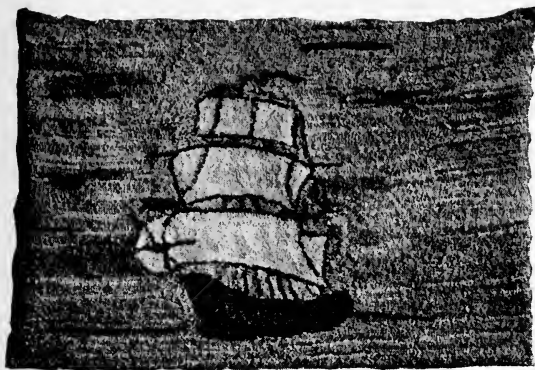
and even the stork in its aquatic surroundings is often shown.

Hooked rugs depicting wild animal life are somewhat rare. There have been a number of lion rugs; the one with which most of us are more or less familiar is that of a large male lion recumbent in the foreground with a smaller lion, in a tropical setting. A beaver with water and bare trees in the foreground was a rare enough subject, and it is quite clear that the maker of this rug lived in a region of fur-bearing animals. Really modern both in its method and treatment, yet pleasing in its color and design, is the big elephant, a most charming rug for the nursery.

Two playful squirrels cavorting over a dull gray road are also delightful bits of animal life that would amuse children and please their elders as well.

### MARINE RUGS

The source of marine views, lighthouses, ships, bits of seascape with gulls, and kindred subjects is easily traceable to the coasts of New England and Canada. The ship, very naturally, is the most commonly reproduced and all kinds of sailing vessels have been shown; little outriggers, sloops, brigs, and full-rigged



### SHIP RUGS

Here we have two marine rugs hooked most admirably by a present day ship-rug maker. The upper illustration is a study in blues and sea green.

The larger rug shows Henry Hudson's ship, "The Half Moon," on the river which now bears his name, with the Palisades in the background.

**32160**



#### ORIENTAL DESIGN

This American hooked rug was so perfectly made that its owner believed it to be imported from Asia. Close examination, however, discloses the fact that it was hooked through canvas and the stitches sewn in place with thread.



schooners with the wind in their sails giving one the impression that they are eagerly winging off to some distant port.

Ships on the old rugs, while quaint and interesting, are not nearly so well drawn as those that are being made today, and if one looks for beauty and perspective it will be found much more readily in the modern ship rugs than in the old ones.

Designs of ships' compasses have often been drawn into our hooked rugs of other days while conch shells and seaweed are sometimes intertwined in the borders together with anchors and twisted rope.

Symbolism and sentiment, fact and fancy, all have a part in the making of hooked rugs of yesterday and today.

## CHAPTER III

### RARE AND UNUSUAL TYPES OF HOOKED RUGS

THE word "rug" in old provincial English meant literally "snug" or "warm," and there are many other uses for rugs than as floor coverings. They have served innumerable purposes such as bed and couch coverings, for travelling as a protection against the weather, as wall and door hangings, and as prayer mats. The use and designation of the prayer rug is applicable not only to the Oriental rug, but to the modern Occidental product as well.

The Oriental prayer rug has some counterparts in the more crudely made hooked rug, for our own American rug makers wrought the substance of prayer—the soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed—into the warp and the deep texture of their simple handcraft. When the rugs were completed and placed by the bedside of their owners, they, too, became prayer rugs just as truly as were those Eastern mats with the spots indicated for placing the palms of the hands when the body was pros-

trated towards Mecca. Into our American rugs there was woven hope and aspiration, and when the daily burdens and struggles were almost too heavy to bear, the outlet to pent-up feelings came through nimbly fashioning rugs of beauty and utility. Even the higher element of consolation was, no doubt, achieved through the medium of primitive textiles, born, perhaps, by the light of a tallow candle.

Nor was the prayer rug of our ancestors entirely figurative. Rugs suitable for the purpose of prayer were made as copies of real Orientals and the patterns are being perpetuated today. The rug shown in our illustration is a very old hooked rug of Oriental design, the colors represented with care and precision. It was made in small pieces and sewn together.

Another delightful rug is that made in Oriental design on a knitted background.

Still another of Eastern origin is a delightful mat in soft rose and tan colorings called, by its maker, the Latch Hook rug, but which is so dainty in its development that the Jewel pattern seems a more appropriate designation.

The Near East also is responsible for some of the very delightful American hand-made rugs of Oriental pattern. One old-time rug done on men's homespun goods is appliquéd in the

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Near East motif of an artichoke with simulated palm framing and husk corners. This representation of the artichoke, a vegetable indigenous alike to the Levant and to Italy, is a modification of the sixteenth century designs found on old velvets and other Near East and Italian textiles. The supposition is that the rug was modelled after a pattern on some rug or hanging brought back to the States by a sea captain, but no definite or authentic history of these old rugs seems to be available, and the best we can do is to temper our imagination with reason and make our deductions accordingly.

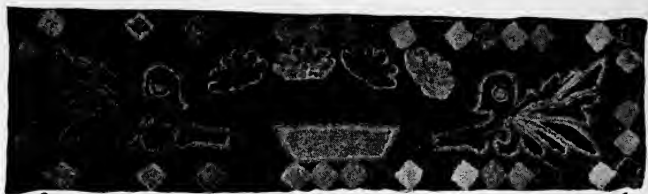
The little mat of our illustration, Plate I, is embroidered in brilliant crewel work. It is a type of rug that was popular from 1840 to 1875. The raised design was made by overcasting a pattern cut in star shape from a piece of heavy cardboard, or in some cases from tin. When the desired thickness was attained the stitches were cut through the center, the pattern removed, and the edges of the star bevelled off neatly and evenly. The mottled effect was produced by using crewel or yarn of various colors.

The Egyptian rug is of silk in the brilliant colorings of the Nile country. Deep rich blues in a dozen or more shades and the unusual

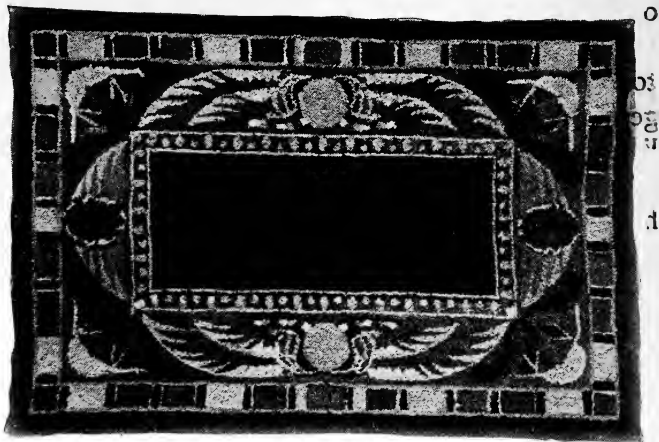


RARE APPLIQUÉ RUG

Antique appliqué rug showing the influence of Italy and the Near East in its design.



HEARTHSTONE FLORAL RUG



EGYPTIAN RUG

The upper picture shows the conventionalized floral and scroll hooked rug with irregular block border.

This silk rug in Egyptian design is rich in coloring and fine in texture. It is appropriate for table cover or wall hanging.

purplish red that one associates with Cleopatra are in close contact with the most vivid greens, yet the effect is harmonious and one has a feeling that the scarab, so nicely pictured, will bring luck to the fortunate possessor of the unusual specimen of American hand-made rugs.

I have purposely avoided speaking of the individual or classes of rug makers because some of the most striking and unusual rugs are often found or rather made in quaint, obscure communities, and it is extremely interesting to know that this example of Egyptian gorgeousness was conceived and completed in a little valley farm house in one of our central states. The maker, a lady no longer young, had never travelled beyond the limits of her county and those adjoining it. She was far away from city shops, yet she wrought with the skill of a master and the texture is as beautiful as the colorings. Such rugs are lovely to bring color and brightness to a wall and are equally appropriate as bench or table covers in a very modern home, but to use them as floor mats would, methinks, be sacrilege.

Another old-time rug that has always seemed like love's labor lost was the so-called "Dollar" rug made by appliquéing coin spot pieces of material to a heavy piece of men's woolen

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goods. Each little spot has a border of feather stitching and the scalloped edges are embroidered in like manner. The diamond design is formed by the arrangement of colors. While not very practical as a floor mat there is yet a quaintness about this relic of other days that seems to indicate that it was constructed by some dear old lady whose strength did not permit her to work on hooked rugs or those of heavy texture and large size.

Another form of appliqué rug called the Caterpillar is made by cutting material, preferably light weight wool or silk on the bias, into strips, and gathering them like a double ruffle through the center. The shirred material is then sewed on to a background in a simple design. Like the Dollar rug this is not practical for actual floor wear, yet it reminds us of the ingenuity of our women folks of another day who considered no work too intricate to be done neatly and well.

Another type of rug that savors of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries is the needlepoint rug illustrated on Plate XI.

The foundation is canvas in rather large mesh and the entire surface of the rug with the exception of the central floral spray, which will be described later, is done by double cross-





NEEDLEPOINT RUG

Rare old needlepoint rug with raised flowers in center. Heavy enough for a rug and soft enough for a table cover or wall hanging.



INTRICATE KNITTED RUG

This is what its owner calls her "wonder rug." It was knitted in section, as shown by the turned-back corner, and bits of wool were looped in to form the design.

stitch, in this manner giving a raised center to each group of four stitches.

The center is in raised or tufted flowers and leaves. There are several ways of attaining this result when modelling flowers. This particular rug center has the outer edges of the leaves and roses in fine cross-stitch, the raised central portion being made by bringing up the thread from the under side, taking a single diagonal stitch, and then bringing up the thread in the center of the stitch and looping or fastening it, and proceeding in like manner until the entire petal or leaf is completed. The ends are then clipped off, leaving the center pile quite high with the sides bevelled off down to the small cross-stitch.

This crewel work of our ancestors is very rich and realistic in coloring. The red roses are beautifully shaded with touches of shadowy purple, and the leaves are pictured in varying tones of greens, browns, and tans. The one time white background of the floral medallion has mellowed into a pleasing ivory tint which shows here and there in the inner geometric border. The outer edge is black and around this is a border or frame of quaint woolen cloth as unique as the rug itself. The rug has an interlining of carded wool and the lining is of

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red felt. The rug is bound with carpet binding of a vintage now almost forgotten.

I have gone into detail in the description of this rare old embroidered rug because it is so beautiful that it deserves to be copied by some one whose taste for such work will make her construct another equally fascinating.

## CHAPTER IV

### RUGS AND CARPETS SUITABLE FOR CITY AND COUNTRY HOMES

THE question of whether American hand-made floor coverings are suitable for city residences as well as for rural homes is left for the individual to answer. An American house, it would seem, should be the proper setting for strictly American textiles. Too many houses are built and furnished in French, Italian, or Spanish style that is not in harmony with the location, the environment, nor, above all, with the inherent characteristics of those who are to be its occupants. The type of architecture and the style of decoration and furnishings are the incidental factors. The taste of the owner, the individual likes in the matter are, after all, the potent factors in the choice of rugs and carpets.

While hooked rugs are often associated with the primness of New England in colonial days, still it is true that there are many brilliant and beautiful designs both antique and modern that would be delightful in a newly created

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home. Brides' rugs are just as lovely today as they were in times past and happy is the young housewife whose wedding gifts include one or more American hand-made rugs of good quality.

There are hooked rugs of such texture, design, and coloring that they may take an honored position along with rare Eastern textiles, for like these Oriental mats such hooked rugs are made with skill, precision, and of artistic design, so that it may be said that good hooked rugs are suitable in any setting.

Their particular province, however, lies in their adding a homelike touch to the residence that is neither lavishly elegant nor pitifully meager in its furnishings. Such is the average American home today, a place of comfort and retreat where the family mingles informally. Whether, then, the home be a city house or an apartment, or a country estate or in a quiet village, all types of American hand-made carpets may be used if a little thought is given to their selection and the proper placing of them.

While a hooked rug may be beautiful in itself, well designed, of good color, splendid wearing qualities, old enough to have value as an antique, or new enough to have long life before it, yet if placed in inharmonious sur-

roundings it loses its own beauty and becomes an eyesore rather than a pleasure. Because of this it seems quite worth while to consider the placing of our American hand-made hooked rugs with regard to bringing about good results.

Almost any type of hooked rug is appropriate with colonial furniture, but when we come right down to the fact that much of the real colonial furniture is very simple and of naturally finished pine or maple, we have a point to settle before going on with our scheme of decoration. Old mahogany is generally referred to as colonial and many pieces of English, French, and even of West Indian origin are included. With this type of furniture good hooked rugs of heavy texture, rich bordering, and floral design well softened by time and not too harsh in outline, are appropriate. Until the more recent revival of the use of hooked rugs many decorators and home makers used Oriental rugs with old mahogany furniture, and if good hooked rugs in the sizes and the quality suitable for their surroundings are prohibitive, perhaps it may be better to use ordinary Oriental rugs. When, however, good taste may be fostered by a pocketbook that permits the purchase of fine hooked rugs, certain it is that they are more suitable and give a more homelike

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and American touch to our furnishings than any imported rug could possibly supply.

### THE LIVING ROOM

The old-fashioned parlor and the formal drawing-room have merged themselves in recent years into what we now call the living room, a room devoted to the common use of the different members of the family, good enough to receive our most distinguished guests, and substantial enough to withstand hard daily wear. It is the room where we are alive and awake, where our eyes are open and where we should surround ourselves with things that are pleasing in themselves and that are in harmony with the other furnishings. The kind of rug or rugs we select for such a room depends upon the color of the walls, the color scheme of the entire room, the curtains, and the floor itself.

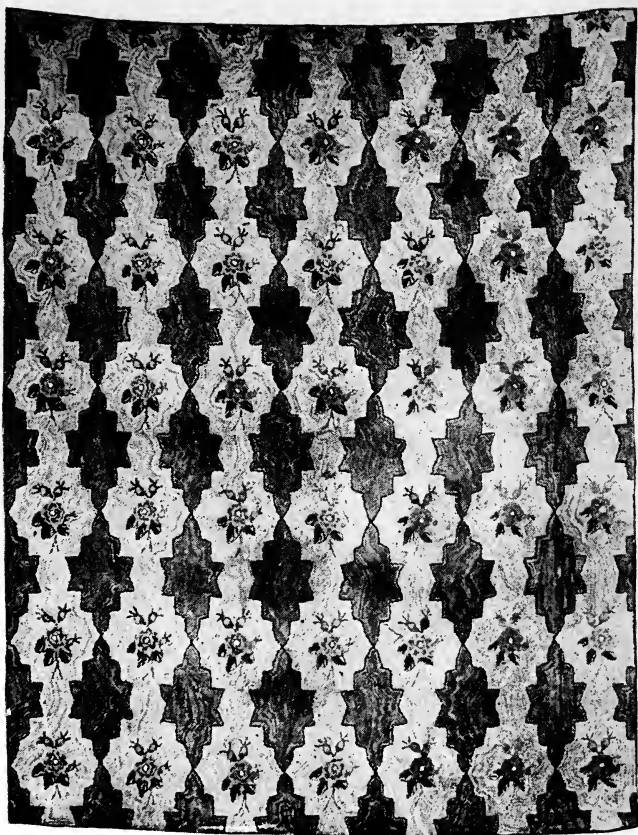
If one is to visualize the ideal floor on which to spread our beautiful hooked rugs I think it is a good, safe, and sensible suggestion that the floor be painted instead of finished in the natural hard wood. The painting of floors in these days of ultra decoration has become the work of an artist instead of an artisan, and I recall several floors which are in themselves things of beauty when used as the backgrounds





#### SOME RUG TREASURES

This corner in Ye Hearthstone Studios shows a group of modern hooked rugs and one antique, the second from the front of the picture. With the exception of the delightful black runner hanging on the door, all the rugs are truly old in conception.



ROSE SPRAY DESIGN

An unusually fine specimen of the carpet design is this quaint old-fashioned hooked rug with sprays of roses and buds centered on an irregular geometric field of tan. The darker figures are soft brown and much of its charm lies in its primitive drawing.

for hooked rugs. One floor in particular is of soft grayish green with a surface almost like marble yet without sheen; and another of the same type carries a suggestion of dull red in its undertone. Such a floor might well be used as the background for almost any type of floral or geometric rug, and if the room be large, better results come from the use of two good-sized rugs, one somewhat smaller, and one or two small ones at the threshold, than by covering the large central space with one rug of the trade dimensions such as seven by nine feet or nine by twelve feet. This permits the use of the same colors in the rugs with a slightly varying design. For example, the two larger rugs might be of geometric pattern, and the rug before the hearth a well-covered floral with a suggestion of the same geometric pattern in the border.

#### THE DINING ROOM

While medium-sized rugs may be used to good advantage elsewhere, the dining room really requires a center rug sufficiently large to extend far enough beyond the dining table to prevent the chair legs catching in its edge, the size of course depending upon the proportions of the room and whether the furniture is medium-sized or massive. While a floral design

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would not be out of place, a geometric, or a geometric with a floral or fruit pattern in the corners, would be more suitable. Here a rug with close, solid hooking gives better service than one with a deep nap which allows the crumbs and dust to sink into its pile. The most serviceable type of rug for a dining room is that made from cotton rags or from ravelled-out jute or burlap or a mixture of these with wool. Even in this room there is ample opportunity to use several smaller rugs in connection with the large one.

### THE BEDROOM

The selection of rugs for the bedroom depends upon one's preference in color and on the kind of furniture. If the bedroom be shared by two, of course there cannot be so much individuality displayed as when the taste of but one person is to be considered. It is well to place rather good-sized rugs of harmonious tones in front of the bed or beds and bureau, while smaller ones carrying out the color scheme could be used at the doors.

The wear on rugs in a room used by two people is double that on the rugs in a single room, therefore the texture and wearing qualities should not be of secondary importance,

and it should be borne in mind that soft, fluffy rugs are more pleasing to slippered or bare feet than the harsher, firmer kind of hooked rug such as is suitable in a dining room. The bedroom, even when it is somewhat formal, is a very appropriate place for decided floral patterns, but care should be exercised to select rugs with a softness and tone blending between the background and the pattern. In other words, the design should not be so bold as to give the impression that it is rising up off the floor. It should be quiet and restful and yet with enough design and color to prevent one tiring of it.

#### THE GUEST ROOM

For the guest room there is a wide leeway in the selection and arrangement of floor coverings. Here we should plan to please by giving that sense of restful comfortableness to our visitor that is so acceptable alike to a man or a woman, an old or a young person. A bedroom is essentially a place of retreat, and if one element more than another predominates, I should suggest that it be beautiful yet simple. The guest room, too, might have one rather good-sized rug for the open fireplace, if there be one, with strips in front of the bed of suffi-

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cient width and length to make sure that the guest need not step out on the cold floor. Three good-sized rugs, happy as to color combination and in harmony with the exposure, bright yellows and warm reds for a north room, grays and tans for a south room, with medium colors for those of eastern or western exposure and with a rather large pattern, would suggest a sense of comfortable floor covering. Somehow a very small pattern of flowers or a finely blocked geometric design does not convey that feeling of hospitality that the freer, bolder designs give, especially when they are carried out in a harmonious trio of guest-room rugs. Whether a guest room be large or small, the idea should be to have the floor well covered without using too many small rugs. In one's own room, however, a few small rugs might be advantageously used, for they can be changed about easily, thus relieving the monotony of seeing the same thing in the same place day after day, week after week.

### THE NURSERY OR THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

Nowhere are American hand-made rugs more appropriate than in the playroom or bedroom of the little folks or young folks of the household. For the nursery there are adorable rugs;

quaint animals, flights of birds, baskets of flowers, and lovely combinations of the floral and geometric types of hooked rugs are suitable to encourage beauty of design and charm of color. Here again, however, we must remember the question of utility. Little feet are never still and the rugs on which the toys are spread should be of somewhat generous dimensions and of a firm texture. Indeed it is a good suggestion to cover the nursery floor entirely with yard-wide, hand-woven carpet, sewn together and tacked down around the edges, using this as the background for a few brilliant and delightful hooked rugs. The use of this rag carpet as a floor covering is advocated because when it becomes soiled it can readily be taken up and the strips put through the family washing machine, thrown over the line and made perfectly sanitary, sweet and clean for service again in the nursery, or it may be the maid's room.

#### THE HALLS

Where the large living room takes the place of the entrance hall, as it does in many country houses, the Welcome mat at the front door gives that hospitable feeling that is suggested by no other form of floor covering; while in

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houses having the old-fashioned long entrance hall through the center, a runner should be used of sufficient width to cover the floor with the exception of a few inches at both sides. Such runners may frequently be found with very little design in them. Many of them come in soft tones of forest green with shaded borders and others have tiled or block designs wrought out by the use of black on neutral grays, tans, browns or whatever colors one may select. If the hall is spacious, merging itself into a reception room, one may dispense with the long runner and use medium-sized rugs instead.

### THE MAID'S ROOM

Let us not forget the maid's room. Do not relegate to the quarters of that faithful household helper all the faded bits of old carpet and dusty cast-offs that are not suitable anywhere else. Let us realize that human nature in its legitimate love of comfort and beauty is just as evident in one walk of life as in another, and so let us make the floor coverings of the rooms occupied by our domestic helpers both attractive and sanitary. Here, as in the nursery and children's bedrooms, we may use to good advantage the nice patterns of yard-wide handwoven rag carpet. It gives a firm, smooth sur-



face, is easily kept clean, and adds brightness and charm to its surroundings. Our sense of economy may make us feel that a hooked rug is an extravagance, but I believe that even a small hooked rug with good coloring and a touch of daintiness in its design in the maid's room would be well worth the investment. The rooms about which we are speaking are not always the most brilliantly lighted nor the most cheerful in outlook. Tired eyes and drooping body might find a little inspiration if the maid's room were made attractive, as it surely would be, with, let us say, a rag carpet in a broken block design of yellows and deep blues, with a soft hooked rug in harmonizing colors. I cannot pass the subject of the maid's room with eyes solely on the floor, and I must say that fresh chintz curtains with deep, cheerful colors, and a print or two on the walls, are also good investments. The home that is furnished with hooked rugs is certainly a cheerful home and the maid who cares for it and keeps it clean and neat should not be forgotten in our planning.

#### THE PORCHES AND SUN PARLOR

In direct contrast to the texture of the rugs used in our sleeping and living rooms we might

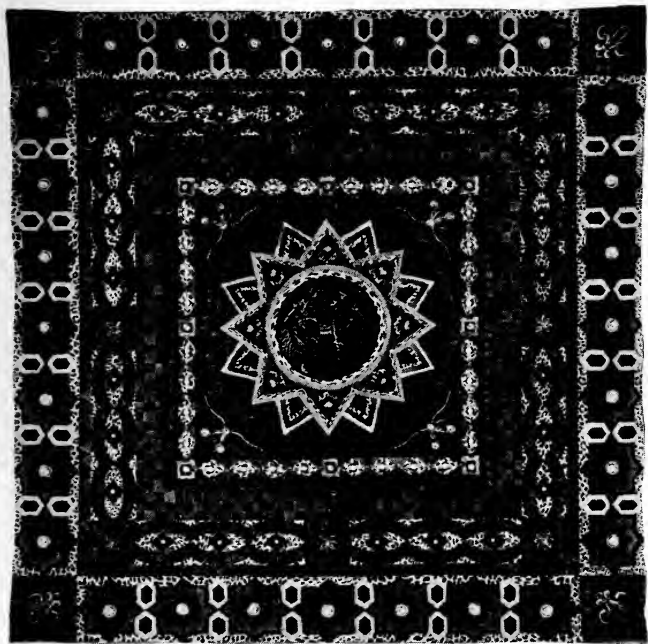
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very well select for the porches and sun parlor rugs of rather thin texture and with but little if any depth of pile. All that is essential is that the design shall be pleasing and that it shall be bright. Here one can use one's most riotous ideas as to coloring and design. Great big bold floral patterns with colors that do not clash with the chintz are quite appropriate here, and if geometric designs be our choice, we need not confine ourselves to the conservative small patterns with scarcely recognizable designs, but we may use bold blocks of brilliant blues and yellows and reds, and a mixture of other colors that will reflect the brightness of the days and enhance our sense of freedom from restraint.

### RUGS FOR CAMPS AND HUNTING LODGES

There is no quainter nor more appropriate setting for American hand-made rugs than the wind-swept rustic cabin of the hunter or the wave-washed seaside cottage.

For the hunter's lodge there is in addition to the coarser and heavier varieties of hooked, braided, and woven rugs, the fur rug made from bits of fur pieced together like an old-fashioned patchwork quilt and hung on the wall as a trophy of the hunt.



UNIQUE FUR RUG

Fur rug made from innumerable pieces of various kinds of fur. This is one of the most elaborate fur rugs ever made. The designer worked out the picture in the center first and then added border designs from material at hand.



QUAINT OLD-TIME RUG

Time has dealt gently with this old lace-edged hooked rug. Its roses and foliage are softened and its black background, faded, giving it a dignity all its own.

Textile rugs should be heavy and rather bold in design. Animal rugs hooked from coarse woolen cloth are excellent before the fire. Dogs and deer are favorites in their primitive settings. Even the good old-fashioned rag carpets woven from coarse rags with gay wool stripes are delightfully comfortable in keeping the wind from penetrating unwelcomely through the cracks of the floor. Oval and round braided rugs of generous size, too, add a touch of real comfort to such a room and there is an excellent chance to use some vivid colors here and there that reflect and emphasize the rosy lights from the roaring wood fire in the chimney—hearthstone rugs, these, in name and in reality—and every retreat of this kind should be amply supplied with genuine American hand-made rugs that reflect, too, the taste of the owners. With such furnishings, in the language of Omar, "A wilderness were Paradise enow."

The seaside shack or the summer home that stands within sound of the turbulent waves may have the floors just as attractively dressed as are those of the mountain hunter. Indeed, if I may venture to refer to it again, hooked rugs have an especially salty flavor and there are no end of nautical subjects to use on rugs for floors and walls and over couches.

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Here the rather light-weight woven carpets in those wonderful color tints and tone combinations that reveal the sunset glow are cool and smooth coverings for the floors of the entire house. These may be relieved here and there by a hooked or braided rug that is restful in design and harmonious in coloring.

For all places, then, where man may dwell either temporarily for rest and recreation or permanently in the spot he calls home, the handcraft of our American rug makers is not only appropriate but essential for comfort, beauty, and utility. Hand-made rugs are cheerful on the hearth and they wear like a stone.

## CHAPTER V

### PRESERVATION OF HOOKED RUGS

WE have a slogan that sounds about like this: Hooked rugs are cheerful on the hearth and wear like a stone. This statement, like most truths, can be questioned because it does not tell the whole truth. Hooked rugs are cheerful only when they are clean and free from the unsightly disfigurations of dirt. True, some people like what they consider the aristocracy of age, faded colors, grimy texture, and frayed edges; but all these elements shorten the life of hooked rugs, and the accumulation of dust is a menace to health. Certain it is that old rugs have a softness that is not possible in a rug fresh from the hands of the maker, but this softness is the result of being well preserved. The beauty of an antique hooked rug lies in having time deal gently with it, in blending its colors and melting one stitch into the other. This is achieved by taking proper care of these precious relics of other days, through keeping them clean and sanitary.

There are a few things in this mundane life

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of ours that are best done in the old way, the natural way, rather than by an artificial method. Science and invention may take away the drudgery of some things that used to be done more laboriously than we have time or patience for today, but most of the big things that mark epochs in families, the pleasures and pains of our daily life, are met in about the same way that our grandmothers faced them.

Hooked rugs are a product of other times, and yet those that are well made today, and the art is being revived, are made in exactly the same manner that those prized mats of almost a century ago were made. Stitch by stitch the pattern is traced by hooking the material through canvas or burlap, and even the old designs are really more sought after by collectors and connoisseurs than new ones. However, unless the rare old rugs are properly taken care of they will literally pass away and the place where they were will know them no more. New rugs, too, will not grow old gracefully unless their owners learn to preserve them by old-time methods.

The very earliest hooked rugs were drawn through a coarse homespun canvas which naturally wore quite well, but even that would not have withstood the heels of time and the



accumulation of the dust of ages ground into it unless certain care had been taken of it week by week as time wore on into years. Dust settles into the bottom of the mesh of hooked rugs and grinds into the foundation, rotting it and causing it to become brittle and easily torn. When the foundation of any structure is in danger, the structure itself is not worth much, so it behooves those who would preserve their valued possessions to understand their weaknesses and to set about remedying so far as possible any worn places.

Since we are dealing with cleaning an old-time article in an old-time way it may not be amiss to remark as did our grandmothers before us, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and we shall proceed to show how to administer that ounce of prevention and touch later on the pound of cure.

Very naturally a new rug, just from the frame, has the loops or its sheared surface rather loose, much looser than after the rug has been trampled on, and is, therefore, more apt to ravel out if one or more of the strands should catch in one's heel or in any rough obstacle such as a broken castor or splintered chair leg. Let us prevent this at once by placing our newly made rug where it will be walked on

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daily. This continual walking on the rug will wear off the bits of ravellings and threads that appear when a rug is first used. These in turn may be removed permanently together with the surface dust by a gentle brushing with a rather soft corn broom, one that has fine splints. Just here we revert again to primitive methods of cleaning; that is, sweeping with a broom. New rugs, as we have just said, require a bit more care in handling than those which have become set, by pressing down and flattening out the stitches and thus preventing them from ripping.

After rugs have had daily wear for a few weeks they may be swept quite briskly with a corn or splint broom, and as they grow older the broom need not be so soft nor the application so gentle as when the rug is young and tender. A rug in its prime will withstand almost any kind of cleansing process that is reasonable or sane, with one exception, and this exception really is a rule which reads, NEVER SHAKE A HOOKED RUG!

"Why, all old-fashioned carpets and floor coverings can be shaken out of doors," someone argues.

They can be shaken and many of them are shaken, but the treatment is not good for the

longevity of any floor covering, and this axiom applies to machine-made as well as hand-made products. The reason is obvious if one stops to consider that when rugs are shaken there is a strain on the fiber at the point where the rug is held, and it is apt to be literally torn to pieces by its own weight. This is particularly true of hooked rugs. The process of their making adds to the original weight of the material holding them together, the burlap or canvas, and the added load this foundation has to bear even under proper treatment is no small element. We must realize that the texture of the material has been pulled apart where the hooking is done, and that in time this burlap will give way unless its health and strength are carefully watched and any signs of disintegration remedied at once.

There have been legends broadcast, concerning hooked rugs, that are half truths. One of them is that the housewives of grandma's days turned their rugs upside down to preserve them from dust and wear. The fact is that the first element in the cleansing of a rug lies in turning it with its face to the floor, and walking on it for a few days before any other attempt is made to clean it. The laws of gravity teach us that heavy matter falls to the ground. Thus the

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dirt that has been pressed into the hooked rug while it was being used right side up has sunk deep into the pile, indeed it has buried itself about as deep as it can get and lies on the burlap or canvas, slowly but most surely cutting its texture. The careful, old-fashioned housewife, by years of experience with hooking and using rugs of this kind, never stopped to analyze the principle that Isaac Newton put into words, but she knew that dirt just naturally settles. Preliminary to further attention she turned her rugs over and let the folks walk on them good and hard, and the same heels and toes that had tramped the dirt and grime into the rug, tramped them out again on to the floor that had been specially scrubbed before the rug was turned. What a lot of dust mother swept up when she again turned her rug right side up, brushed it lightly, and put it down on another freshly scrubbed part of the porch or kitchen floor.

The old-time method of actually cleaning hooked rugs was by using a little water and a strong old-fashioned soap with a scrubbing brush. A good lather was made and the bristles dipped into the solution just far enough to carry enough of the suds to the pile of the rug to wet the top of it, but not to soak into the

texture and wet its foundation. Already the loose dirt and dried particles of dust had been removed by being tramped out while the rug was upside down, so that the only problem confronting the tidy housekeeper was to make the rug look nice and bright on the surface.

Now the real process of cleansing was attacked vigorously, yet most skillfully, and I feel like writing those two words in italics, because next to the no shaking command these two words give the key to caring properly for our hooked rugs, *vigorously* yet most *skillfully*. The process is vigorous in that a goodly application of what was known as elbow grease was applied, by going over the entire surface of the rug with a brisk circular motion of the scrubbing brush. A piece of coarse, loose towel dipped in hot water and wrung out lightly, quickly removed the suds and grime. This is the real cleansing process. The scrubbing loosens the dirt, but the hot towel takes the dirt away. The towel or cleaning cloth should be frequently rinsed in plenty of water, and care should be taken to prevent the rug from becoming wet in the depths of its nap or through to the foundation. A second going over with a fresh cloth wrung from clean water, without any soap in it, will leave the surface of the

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hooked rug soft both in texture and in blending of colors.

Thus a part of the process of our ounce of prevention against the destruction that might otherwise occur as time goes on has been accomplished. Now we have at hand a clean rug, dry on the wrong side but decidedly damp, to say the least, on the right side. What shall be done? Dry it, of course, but do not do this simple thing artificially or you will spoil all the work you have already done. Take your rug into the open air, and if you have a grassy back yard lay it out in a shady spot for a little while, and let old Mother Earth put her healing balm into your treasure. Let us not try to analyze the reason for all this, but just accept it as a fact, that contact with the great big sphere on which we live and move and have our being, is good for things as well as for people. After a few hours the rug will take on a new lease of life and when nearly dry it may be hung across a clothes line for a little sunning. This process will do nothing more than take away a bit of the heavy color, and will leave an unusually sweet and truly lovely-to-live-with rug. It will be rejuvenated, made young readily and easily, because it had not been allowed to decay from neg-

lect nor to rot by being wet through and through.

In homes where hooked rugs were used extensively and where the attic contained an ample supply to take the place of the old products that had begun to show wear, the process just described has been used and indeed is still the method of caring for the rugs that we are beginning to appreciate more particularly now that they are growing scarcer.

#### MENDING

Now comes the always somewhat discouraging element of trying to make and take a pound of cure. The damage has been done! Our beloved and lovely rug that was so soft in its colorings and so harmonious in its combination of old-time posies is fast nearing its end. We have tried to mend it, but somehow every time we sewed it or tried to hook new stitches into the worn-off places it broke away anew and with sorrow we reluctantly put our piece of dilapidated handcraft into a dark corner where its age and condition were less obvious to the casual observer. This did not help the rug; as a matter of fact it actually shortened its days. Every time we looked at it we had a feeling of shame that we had had a part in the

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untimely death of our once lively bouquet of roses and bluebells resting so forlornly now in a muddy-looking, drab background with a border of greenish, grayish, rusty one-time black.

What can be done for this depressingly stiff, ragged rug? Let us see. Hooked rugs are cheerful on the hearth and wear like a stone. If they wear like a stone this poor little parody of a ruglet is not altogether hopeless, for it has not yet all turned to dust, so away! let us quickly get that pound of cure into action.

I confess that attacking the problem of curing a rug that is sick from neglect, lack of sunlight, air, and filled with germs that are as deadly as those that come from any other decayed thing, is a hard one. The only question we must decide is whether the rug means enough to us to undertake its restoration.

Instead of going on with this story entirely in the abstract, I can best illustrate my point of repairing an old rug and cleansing it by telling of one that was brought to be mended by a sweet, young, expectant mother who valued it for sentimental reasons. It had a big unsightly hole in the center, part of one of the full-blown roses in the bouquet design was entirely gone, together with the foundation of burlap. The rug was falling apart with dirt



and wear. Its surface was grimy, its texture harsh, and there were breaks along its edges that seemed to preclude any possibility of restoration. It was suggested that a new rug, carrying out the color scheme of her room, might really be less expensive and more satisfactory than to put time and expense on the sad-looking relic.

"But I like this rug so much, and I'd rather have it in my room than anything else, except an old-fashioned cradle. I would love that, but my husband doesn't care for old things as I do. I'd rather have this old rug fixed up than to use any other."

So the rug was sent to a dear old lady who for many years has been making and repairing hooked rugs. When she heard the story of the reason for its being mended, she set about her task by searching through her rag bag for wool materials that had the required colorings for the torn parts to be replaced. She was skillful in her selection. Long experience had given her eyes an exactness of color sense that few not so trained possess. She cut a piece of canvas about five inches larger all around than the hole in the center, basting it into place carefully on the wrong side of the rug. She then sewed the rug into the frame on which

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new rugs are made and proceeded to cut away all the badly worn parts surrounding the original tear in the rug. This done, and quite without any design being drawn in, she replaced the rose and the background. Skilled hands, trained eyes, and a love of the work created a new rose harmonious in tones and texture.

Still, after the rug was mended, it was defective because it was not clean. Now seemingly the logical method of procedure would have been to have had the rug cleaned before it was mended, but in this case the rug was too far gone constitutionally to withstand the process of even a mild cleansing. Thus it was necessary to line it all over with the same kind of natural-colored burlap that was used in mending the rug. After it was lined neatly it was ready for a surface cleaning, for that was all this particular rug would stand. It was put on a table and soap suds applied with a piece of Turkish towelling instead of a scrubbing brush. The process was magically successful and the deep tints and soft lights again smiled from their background as if in welcome of the dear baby in honor of whose coming birth it had been reborn. This rug looks well and with some care will last a while, but when a rug has reached a

stage of fragility of texture that prevents its being cleansed by having the dust tramped out of it, its days of real utility are nearing an end.

Strange as it may seem, a rug that is not of extremely heavy texture often wears longer than one that would appear to be everlasting, because it is thick. Such a rug is the receptacle for more dust and it holds the dust tighter than a mat of thinner pile. However, in cleaning a thin rug, more care must be observed or the back of it will become water soaked. When that happens the life of the rug is brief.

Although ammonia was not used long ago to any extent in the care and cleansing of rugs, it is a fact worth putting down in our memories that it is a good thing to use on the surface of a rug. For one that is just a bit soiled it is well to wipe off the surface about once in two or three weeks with a cloth or coarse piece of towelling wrung out of a quart of hot water containing a teaspoonful of ammonia. This process, too, removes the lint and restores the colors. For a badly faded rug a stronger solution of ammonia and water will work wonders.

I cannot turn from this subject without referring to the question so frequently asked by owners of hooked rugs. Shall one use the vacuum cleaner on hooked rugs? Since hooked

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rugs are an old-time product, old-time methods are best in caring for them. Therefore I should say, with all due respect to the magic of that modern implement of housecleaning, the vacuum cleaner, let it alone. I would not use one of those powerful suction machines on a tender or well-made hooked rug. The simple things required for their care and preservation are so much better that there is no need of resorting to mechanical methods of cleansing.

Hooked rugs are cheerful on the hearth when they are clean, and they wear like a stone if they are given the same chance in life that a stone should have; that is, fresh air—an opportunity to breathe—and a bit of sunshine, for even a stone will disintegrate if these things are withheld.

## CHAPTER VI

### MAKING RUGS FOR OURSELVES

Now with all the revival of the early hand-crafts there is a tremendous call for worthwhile hooked rugs. By the same revival there is, too, a strong temptation to those commercially inclined to imitate by quick methods those things that are valuable when made by hand stitch by stitch. Nor is this illegitimate in itself, but it is illegitimate to make a thing in whole or in part by machinery and to foist it on a gullible, because not entirely educated, public as the real thing. Ever since the days of Gobelin tapestries those wonderful products have been copied or imitated, yet the real article is still priceless.

Genuine hooked rugs, like Gobelin tapestries, and I make no apology for referring to them in the same sentence, must be made one stitch at a time, by human hands; not by machines that push the thread or rags through, making an all too neat surface, nor by the larger machines that turn out duplicate rugs in smoky patterns or garish nondescript scrolls or

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mechanically perfect florals. Such rugs may please some folks who have heard that hooked rugs are all the fashion, but their presence on the market serves largely to enhance the value and to inflate the price of the genuine article.

This chapter is written in the spirit of helpfulness, of encouragement to our women to return to something which they can do in their own homes, by their own firesides, while father reads his paper or even while he is at the club, and therefore the machine-made products are quite another subject. They may have their place in the commercial world, and they most likely do, for many of them are to be found as one travels over this big cosmopolitan country of ours, but let us stick to the story of *hand-made* rugs.

In reviving the rug-making art of our early American women, I cannot stress too seriously just this point, and I place it in this chapter with pure malice aforethought, whatever that trite but seemingly apropos phrase may mean. Lest I weaken, I am going to tell you right here: do NOT make rugs to sell, make them for YOURSELF. Do not make them for your lover, your husband, your mother, or your friend, for if you do you will not make a really

individual rug. Make rugs for yourself. Make the kind of rugs that you like, the kind that appeal to you, the kind of rugs that you would like to keep forever. Then, and only then, the instructions and hints I have tried to give not only here, but through many moons of contact with rug makers, and would-be rug makers, will bear the right kind of fruit. Leave it to the other woman to make her kind of rug. You make your own kind.

Put into the first rug that which is you—your own ideas of color, design, and workmanship—and your finished piece will be a joy. After all, why not get joy out of work? I could not be a slave driver. I could not write a line of instructions or suggestions if I did not know, absolutely, that the thing I try to explain would make women more happy themselves. Why, what is a rug anyhow? If it is just a bit of old rags, and mind you, old rags as a rule are best, why go to all the bother and pains of cutting up material? Why not lay father's old "pants" down in front of the fireplace? Why not?

Because that is not the place for father's old nether garments. Such a disposal might result in a family row when father came in and saw the ignominy of such treatment of his belong-

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ings. He would prefer the bare floor to such a makeshift for a rug.

I will tell you why ugly, old, worn-out things are turned into articles of virtue and delight. It is because of the joy in the making—the thrill of pleasure and satisfaction that comes to any really good woman when she realizes that her ideas, her industry, her hands, her artistry, her love of a beautiful home, have enabled her to surround herself with things that money cannot buy, *because they are hers already.*

What has this to do with making rugs to sell? Everything.

Innately, we are selfish animals. We must have the best for ourselves. So we make our rugs for ourselves, and then, if we must do so, we sell them; but if when we were making them we had a feeling that they were to go out into the big world of buying and selling, I have an idea they would not be so well made. Yea, it is more than an idea; it is a knowledge of human nature, and much as I love those dear souls to the north, the south, the east, and the west whose hands are at this moment industriously fashioning hooked rugs, experience has taught me that the finest rugs, those made with greatest care, those with the little loving touches,



the streaks of sunshine in them, were made originally for the homes of the makers.

When rugs are made for sale and designs copied and carried out under direction, the work may be good, but a thing copied or made under the direction of another becomes, in part at least, the other person's work. Therefore, in my own humble opinion, it does not carry with it that charm that is to be found in spontaneous expressions of the worker's own ideas. As a matter of fact, while rugs of the simpler designs or of geometric figures may be copied, I have never seen two rugs exactly alike either in texture or design. Similar, yes, but not alike unless they were made to sell, and then, most likely, they had close contact with a hand or power machine.

## CHAPTER VII

### FOUNDATION MATERIALS FOR HOOKED RUGS

THE term "hooked rug" is synonymous with pulled or drawn in, because the material from which the design is made is hooked, pulled, or drawn through canvas, burlap, or other material that is woven in straight lines.

The early rugs of this type were frequently made on old hand-woven cloth of cotton or linen, and occasionally the rather loosely woven linsey-woolsey was utilized for the purpose. Linsey-woolsey, as its name indicated, had some linen and some wool, but the fiber was short and the material was not really a superior product of the hand loom. Rather it was generally woven from the left-overs from linen weaving. Underclothes and children's winter dresses were made of this material and when the garments were worn threadbare the larger whole pieces were sewn together to form the foundation for a simple-patterned hooked rug. Such goods, however, wiry in texture and dark in color, could be used only for applying the simplest lines to the pattern. Rugs made on

this material were generally all-over hit-and-miss; that is, scraps of all kinds and colors were drawn in with no attempt at a pattern except for a narrow border of plain material, generally of black.

These rugs are useful principally as harmonizers for use in rooms where there is an abundance of color and the floor coverings carry the suggestion of the various basic tones without emphasizing any one of them.

But to return to the materials on which rugs have been made: The general statement that any material of straight weave, like bur-lap, canvas, and similarly plain-woven fabrics might serve the purpose, is somewhat misleading. The sensible housewife used the goods at hand that she deemed most suitable and that adapted itself to her method of hooking. Rather open mesh fabrics like gunny sacks, which were often ripped open, washed and starched and then ironed out smooth and straight, were more suited to the heavier, thick type of rug hooking than for really dainty effects.

The finest rugs, those with short stitches and a close, even nap, were generally made on home-spun linen, and such rugs are both rare and beautiful, for the texture of the background

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is close yet strong, and some of the rugs made on this hand-loomed linen are almost as fine as needlepoint.

Hand-woven linens are today too expensive to be used in such an inconspicuous place as the foundation of a rug. Nor do our present-day rug workers have to use old sacks or linsey-woolsey, for there is procurable at very reasonable prices burlap of varying weights and widths suitable for rug making.

The novice who undertakes to make a hooked rug is advised to make a small mat first and after her hand and her hook work smoothly in unison a larger rug may be designed. I would suggest that five-eighths of yard-wide material be secured for our first effort at rug making. Foundation burlap may be bought at most department stores for from twenty-five to thirty-five cents a yard for the thirty-six inch width. Where such burlap is not obtainable a better grade of canvas such as is used in art needlework may be bought at a trifling cost for a small piece.

Since this is to be a rug made from scraps of old and new material at hand, wool and cotton, we shall select a weave of canvas or burlap that is not too close and heavy in texture nor yet too loose and thin. A medium grade

of burlap, rather firm and with a smooth surface, is admirable.

The burlap should have an inch hem turned in all around and basted down with rather long stitches, using a thread not heavier than number fifty spool cotton. When the hooking is pulled through this double material, the hem stays in place without stitching. Heavy thread catches in the hook, and short stitches tend to pull or draw the material. After the hem is basted in, the rug should be pressed out with a fairly warm, but not hot, iron and the basic material is then ready for marking in the design or pattern of the rug.

I might say here that a thread should be drawn to mark the place to cut the material, for here again care in small things makes the work easier as it progresses, and when this is done the rug will be straight at the edges and the corners will form perfect right angles.

#### THE ODDS-AND-ENDS RUG

Making a nice rug from odds and ends, using the materials at hand and then blending them into an harmonious whole, is an art that is not learned from books. It is like making a soup tasty, nourishing, and unusual from the left-overs. There must not be too much nor too

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little of any one thing, and the bits of cotton, wool, and even a touch of silk to form the deep rosy heart of a flower or the sunset glow of the sky are all useful and combine artistically when time has softened their brightness and left the finished rug a textile that no other manner of making can equal.

Just a few sentences about laundering: To the careful housewife this instruction is like carrying coals to Newcastle—unnecessary. Nothing that is soiled should ever be put in the rag bag. As long as soap and water are procurable there is no excuse for conserving dirt. All rags, therefore, that are to be a part of our hand-made rugs should be as clean as soap and sunlight can make them. What matters it if some parts fade? They are all the more artistic when blended with the deeper tones.

Now using just the right proportions of any one material is, after all, not entirely a hit-and-miss proceeding. The rug that is beautiful, that lasts through sunshine and shadow, that resists the wear of countless seasons, is a rug that is made in an orderly manner.

When the impulse to make a rug attacks the housewife it springs from two sources; her rag bag is full and besides, that old rug in

front of the bureau needs to be put where all the thin places and near holes will not be seen. Naturally, then, there is fruition of the subconscious wish for a really lovely rug in front of the bureau, and long before the heavy bag is brought forth, mother knows that she is going to use those old trousers of father's for the background. She most likely thinks of them as "pants," and after all she is just abbreviating in good modern fashion a very respectable word, rather a pretty one, too—pantaloons.

Now throughout all the ages even the best of homespun wool will fade when it is made up into garments that descend from Sunday best to the place of overalls; and in places where the cloth is almost threadbare, the color, too, has disintegrated; and a once uniformly colored garment, gray or brown or mayhap blue, becomes like Joseph's coat of many colors.

In order to distribute the deep tones with the lighter ones, and to give that pleasing relief by blended shades of the same color, mother just puts in the background in swirls and semicircles, and once in a while she quite by mistake, it would seem to the mechanical worker, puts in a bit of vermillion and to offset its giddiness her skilled fingers pick up a bit of equally bright blue. She knows, this worker

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with rags instead of a brush, that her color combination will give a glow to the picture that is the sure result of judicious use of grays and purples. Mother is an artist—a true artist—and the best of it all is that she does not know it. Why if she followed written rules about so many stitches of brown, so many of blue, and so on all through the spectrum, she would have what she would be quite justified in calling a mess.

It is just this method of planning the rug, having a big idea in mind and working it out with individuality, that made the old-time rugs so fascinating. All of which brings me to the very patent thought that it is not so much what the rug is made of as the way it is made. It is, in a sense, like the very delightful French hat that a woman of wealth was trying on in company with a frugally brought up country relative. The price was high and the visitor whispered in a none too low tone, "Why, that hat hasn't five dollars' worth of material in it!" and the French lady said quite firmly, and with a characteristic shrug of her shoulders, "But Madame knows, eh, that eet ees not what ees on ze hat, but ze know how to make him!"

There are just as many ways to make rag rugs, hooked rugs, even as there are of making



hats. Some folks like one kind, some another, and like the hat it all depends upon what one has to put in the piece, and the skill and taste that are exercised by the maker. Some people are naturally painstaking and others a bit slovenly, and this kind of work produces rugs that reflect the character and mood of the maker. One of the most exquisitely made rugs I have ever seen was done by a little lady whose duties all day long kept her at the beck and call of whimsical folks and serious, so that she did not have a moment to herself until she returned to her own room at night. It is interesting to note that this lady was brought up in a section where the more primitive type of hooked rugs was made in almost every home, and yet when she got ready to make her masterpiece, and it is such really, she selected an Oriental pattern and worked it up on the most expensive of art canvas. I wish it were possible to portray the beautiful blending of colors and the neatness of the work in this rug; yet it contained a little bit of almost every conceivable material that could be hooked in, even old pieces of soft chamois, and the tops of kid gloves were democratically intermingled with rich red flannels in many shades, and old army blue overcoating.

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The primitive element will crop out, however, even in such a rug as this, for instead of making it from a series of patterns cut from paper, she traced the design from several Orientals and ran a basting thread around each design. That rug took years to make, but it is a gem of its kind.

Most rag-bag rugs show the originality and the tastes of their maker. They are the real American hand-made rugs that our women in early days coveted, and to covet was to possess then as all through the ages, or at least to make the effort to possess another, and for that reason we have so many varieties that in this chapter we shall not go more into detail, but allow the worker to plan according to her materials and to execute according to her own ideas of what she likes in designs for rugs for her own particular use.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARKING IN THE DESIGN

I PURPOSELY designate this chapter "marking in the design" because my great wish for the usefulness of the book is that we revive the art of rug making as it was in its best days. Then there were no stamped designs as such, but each worker wrought the outline of the thing she wished to picture herself or enlisted the assistance of her family or friends more gifted in drawing than she was. When a particularly beautiful design was evolved it was passed around the neighborhood and each worker endeavored to improve upon the original, and at last the pattern appeared in commercialized form—stamped on burlap, sometimes with the colors to be used in hooking in the design more or less crudely indicated.

As long ago as the period of the Civil War between the North and South, such stamped burlap was sold through advertisements in the press, and the industry of providing stamped patterns for rug making has grown steadily since them. With the revival of the interest

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in early American furnishings new firms carrying stamped rug patterns came into existence, and the old firms accelerated their sales and enlarged their facilities for reproducing splendid old designs and inventing new ones combining some of the attractive features of the primitive rugs with elements that made the patterns modern in treatment.

Nor is there any word but that of commendation for those who in that way encourage the women of today to make hooked rugs. For those who like to follow a mechanically traced pattern such models are excellent, but I have felt absolutely sure that the love rugs, those that are made from individual designs rather than from copies of the patterns other folks have evolved, will be more attractive even when the design is very crude and simple. Much has been said and written about self-expression. A child is taught to draw an object or to model it as he sees the object, to put into the finished product not a mechanical reproduction of it, but his interpretation of the symmetry or beauty of the object. And are we not all children? Do we not all love that which we create in love and with hope and aspiration? The result of our labor may fall far short of our desires of what it should become, but

in it is effort, aim, hope, and a love that covers as a beautiful mantle all its imperfections.

This self-expression of our ideas of beauty, harmony, and an approach to perfection is what makes rug making a pleasure and a blessing to those who engage in it. Early in this volume I spoke of the women in rather primitive American homes loving their flower gardens, their hardy, well-tended rose bushes with the luscious big blossoms that literally scattered sweetness to all who came near them. Such flowers were perpetuated through the medium of hooked rugs made during the cold winter when roses and their fragrance were but memories. Much of the joy and all of the beauty of the rose rug of other years came in the making of the design and carrying out the beautiful colors with the materials at hand.

So today the rugs that are designed by the workers themselves or drawn in by friends whose skill executes the ideas of the rug maker as to form, are individual products. They are rare rugs because they are one of a kind. The basic pattern may be used again and again, but each rug made is unique and a masterpiece because it carries the thought of its architect and builder. All of which may be summarized into this: Design your own rugs, and simple or

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imperfect, quaint or grotesque, the finished piece will not only contain bits of your own clothing and household fabrics, but it will reflect the ideas you may have as to formal or informal patterns.

If there were but one way to mark in designs on burlap or canvas there would be a limit to the possibilities, but there are many simple ways of applying designs to the burlap. The simplest form of drawing is by straight lines—making two points and drawing a line to connect them—thus exemplifying the definition “a straight line is the shortest distance between two points,” and an ordinary yardstick is a useful adjunct to the drawing. Besides the yardstick a piece of charcoal or a marking crayon, some stiff paper from which to cut patterns, and a pair of sharp scissors—good long blade paper shears that cut clean and even—serve honorably in connection with a table large enough to spread out the canvas fully and flatly on its top. Once more, and with no apology for mentioning it in connection with this subject, we might go back to the days of the big clean-scrubbed kitchen tables—the kind with soft pine tops—but if no hutch or tavern tables remain as heirlooms we can very well use the modern pine top kitchen

table that was so popular a few years ago, before the porcelain top supplanted it. After ascertaining the middle of the piece of burlap selected as the foundation for the rug by folding the material crosswise and lengthwise, fasten it to the table with thumbtacks and proceed to put in the design.

In speaking of hand-made designs let us treat first of the simple free-hand drawing that anyone can do and yet make effective. The best known type of old-fashioned hooked rug is that known as the floral, having in it a group of three roses near the center with foliage and a few buds. Let us in our imagination then, and for the purpose of this chapter, design a rug of this character.

We have our burlap fastened to the top of the table, smooth and neat. Without resorting to tape measure or yardstick let us make three round dots, not large but distinguishable, at an equal distance from the large dot made in the center which the lengthwise and crosswise foldings made. This is not a difficult process, for if one is to make a hooked rug or a dress or a cake, one must use that element which comes into the proper doing of things, good judgment. Therefore, if the three marks are not perfectly equidistant, even that may be a virtue rather

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than a fault. Around these let us draw a circle as nearly round as we can, but if it is flat or oval, that makes no difference.

Then let us put in a few dexterous strokes to mark the heart of the rose and add a few lines, somewhat irregularly, to indicate the loose, open petals of a full-blown rose, and lo, the deed is done, the motif has been established, and it remains now for us to design a few leaves, mark in the veinings and the stems, crudely if need be, and yet using again our good judgment in the proper distribution of them, for here, too, what is not perfect is often more pleasing than what is mathematically accurate. Thus we have from our own ideas and by our own hands designed the central figure of the most popular kind of hooked rug—the rose floral.

If the drawing was a task instead of a pleasure it is not at all necessary to go any further. A rug with a mottled background carrying the same color in varying shades, put in in swirls, is very nice. If, however, as will most likely be the case, the design for the center of the rug has been successful, our industrious worker will no doubt add some floral corners to the little rug, making perhaps a bud in one corner with a leaf or two, and a half-blown rose in the other two diagonally opposite corners. This



triple rose design is simply a suggestion of others that may be worked out with a single rose in the center or two roses towards the ends with sprays of leaves and buds connecting them.

It is not necessary to go further into the subject of free-hand drawing because those who have any skill at all in handling the crayon will be able to evolve beautiful designs in central medallions and to formulate floral borders more or less intricate.

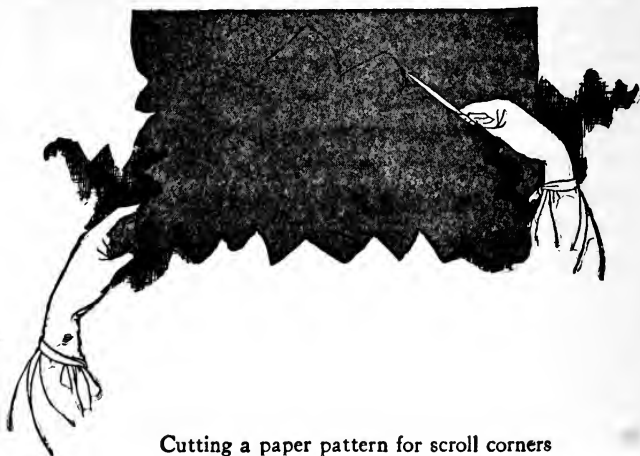
Let us revert again to the yardstick and take for an example the simple block pattern such as one finds in oilcloths and linoleums. The lines may be drawn diagonally and the blocks semi-divided, making little triangular figures which can be worked out by the use of well selected colors.

Animal rugs that would seem to be rather difficult are simply an application of a pattern cut from paper. The art of paper cutting, which in the earlier days developed until it reached the artistry of the silhouette, is today almost obliterated. The little folks have mechanical toys procured from the five and ten cent store or the more expensive shops, and there is no longer any necessity for mother or grandmother or grandfather to cut toy dogs and dolls, kittens and rabbits from paper.

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In the early days of rug making, however, grandma's nimble scissors created fascinating figures of prancing horses, shaggy dogs, roosters and geese and other domestic animals, making a menagerie that was just as pleasing to the child as the more elaborate and more costly toys of today. And it was just this facility of cutting out paper animals that was back of the animal designs found on hooked rugs.

The paper patterns were laid on stiff cardboard and the outlines traced and cut out, and the cardboard applied to the rug, smoothly tacked, as we have said, to the kitchen table.



Cutting a paper pattern for scroll corners

If a pair of animals was desired the pattern was reversed and thus we have such fascinating twins as those shown in the pair of squirrels illustrated.

The scroll which played such a large part in the scheme of decoration in many of our American hand-made rugs was also formed by a pattern from paper and applied to the four corners of the rug.

While any kind of design might be copied by means of tracing paper, the Oriental patterns were perpetuated with extreme accuracy by this method. In the earlier days of the craft, tracing papers such as are now easy to procure from stationers or artists' supply stores were not in common use, and the thin, very fragile tissue paper was made to serve the purpose. Placed directly over the wrong side of the Oriental rug to be copied the lines of a border were drawn with broad strokes, a section at a time. This, in turn, was pricked into cardboard with a stout pin or needle and the designs cut out one by one, and laid on to the homespun or canvas foundation material of the rug to be made. The reason designs were sketched from the back of the genuine Orientals is obvious when we recollect that the design is very distinct on the wrong side and the process of

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drawing is much easier because of the firm, smooth texture there.

To attempt to transfer a design from the front or pile side of a rug or carpet, using lightweight paper, would not have resulted successfully. It would seem, in this connection, that this method of copying Oriental designs would account for the exactness of pattern on American hand-hooked rugs of Oriental pattern. By the same argument, however, we can readily understand that when a lovely imported floral carpet furnished the inspiration for the design, free-hand had to be used because the thick pile on the right side and no distinct pattern on the wrong, left the designer nothing but his eye and his hand with which to measure size, place, and proportion. When all is said, however imperfect though the floral and other free-hand designs were, they have outlived in popularity the rugs that were made as a duplicate of the Orientals.

## CHAPTER IX

### GETTING READY TO WORK

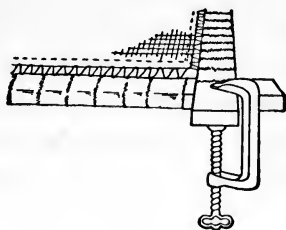
#### THE FRAME

THE larger hooked rugs are put into frames to hold them taut during the process of hooking in the design and the background. Such frames are used in rug making in the same way that embroidery hoops keep the work straight and prevent the stitches from puckering. Some embroidery workers do not find it necessary to stretch the material on which they work out flat, but by a dexterity of manipulation they do beautiful needlework without using a frame. In like manner some hooked rug makers taboo a frame, and hook in their designs evenly and skillfully by simply holding the burlap on the lap. Large rugs, however, cannot be handled successfully unless the burlap is fastened into a frame.

Like the quilting frames of other days, the frames on which to stretch the embryonic hooked rug are simply four pieces of wood of sufficient length and strength to hold the rug firmly. The four pieces of wood may be

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wrapped with two-inch strips of unbleached muslin, or heavy cotton cloth such as drilling or bed ticking may be folded double and tacked to the inner edge of the frame. The edges of the rug are sewn to the cloth of the frame with strong cotton thread or light twine. The corners are clamped together with the inexpensive metal clamps procurable at any five and ten cent store. It is best to attach the burlap to the frames at the ends first, then the rug is stretched out to its full length, the clamps fastened, and the rug is ready for its initial stitches in the hooking process.



Frame, clamp and burlap foundation



Flat joining for wrapping of frame

Another kind of frame is nothing more nor less than an adaption of a quilting frame to the purpose of rug making. Like the frame just described, there are four strips of wood of sufficient length to permit the ends of the rug to be fastened to two of them, and as the work progresses it can be rolled up. This manner of working is necessary when a large rug is being made in a small room.

Small rugs may be hooked by resting the frame across the backs of two chairs or other pieces of furniture of the right height for the comfort of the worker. In this connection I must speak a little further on the subject of comfort while making the rug. There is wisdom in selecting a spot in the home where the light comes over the left shoulder, and if the worker has a sensation of discomfort or annoyance while hooking, the chances are that the frame is too high, which would cause the shoulder to ache, or if too low a "crick in the neck," as the old-time rug makers designated muscle strain from bending over, is a reminder that we are handicapping ourselves through carelessness in seemingly little things.

Another suggestion that may not be entirely amiss in encouraging the would-be rug maker, is the matter of keeping her work together and

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yet avoiding the unpleasantness of having the living room or sun porch where the work is done present a disorderly appearance. Working with pieces of old material, tearing away strips and clipping the ends from the pieces hooked in cause dust and litter under the frame, but this can all be avoided by spreading down an old sheet or a discarded cretonne curtain or couch cover. When the work is put aside for the day the sides and ends can be folded over and the bits of material already prepared for hooking will be available when the sheet or whatever is used for the purpose is opened up for the resumption of work.

### THE HOOK

Hooked rugs are made by pulling strips of material through burlap with a hook pushed down from the upper or right side. The left hand holds the strip of cloth and catches it into the notch or hook, bringing the strip up to the right side in the form of a loop.

The needle or hook bears a relationship to the work being done. For fine hooking a small needle, sharp at the point and with a small notch or hook, naturally gives best satisfaction; while for the heavier kinds of rugs a larger needle is used.



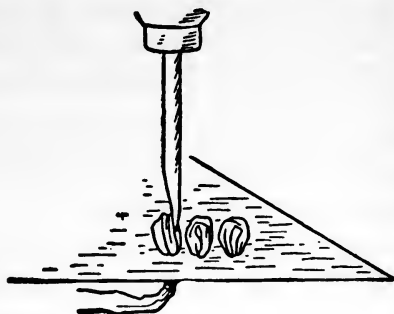
The old-time hand-made steel hooks are rather heavy and not at all suitable for making small rugs of medium weight. The smaller hook is generally procurable at the art counters in department stores for twenty-five cents. The advantage of the smaller short-handled hook is that it fits into the palm of the hand and is more easily manipulated than the heavier ones with long handles. Another thing that should be observed when selecting a hook is that it is sharp at the point, making it easy to push down through the mesh of the canvas or burlap.

A little practice will soon accustom one to handling this little first cousin to a crochet hook dexterously and efficiently in bringing up the loops of material evenly and in conformity to the design of the rug. In this connection it may be well to say a few sentences about the use of any form of hooking contrivance more intricate than this simple steel hook with its little wooden handle.

With it the material being worked into the rug is always held under the rug and the stitches pulled up as has been said. A contrivance, several contrivances indeed, are on the market by which the process of hooking is accelerated and the work done very evenly. The idea

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embodied in these little hand machines is generally very seductive and the labor of hooking is reduced to a minimum, but rugs made with a mechanical implement of that kind are not real hooked rugs. They are machine made and if folks desire that sort of floor covering well and good. This volume is designed for awakening a wider interest in the real old-time hand-made floor coverings.



## CHAPTER X

### HOOKING IN THE DESIGN

IN detail the subject of materials for the foundation of rugs has been treated and in like manner our ambitious novice has been admonished to use materials at hand rather than to purchase new goods for the designs and background. The subject of designing and preparing all materials to be used, it is believed, has been comprehensively explained, and with a comfortable chair and our rug materials at hand, with a good hook and a steady hand we are now ready to start the process of actually making a hooked rug.

There seems but little more to say, for the truth is, "well begun is half done." Many pages have been devoted to the preliminaries and incidentals and now when the big event is at hand there is nothing more to tell other than to apply the ideas that have evolved from this treatise and—get to work.

But where shall we start?

Here is the material and the equipment and the willingness to make a present-day hooked

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rug by the best of old-time methods, yet the hands lie limp in our laps and we gaze at our lovely floral design and the straight line border, and all that we have read and all that we have tried to treasure in our memories have simply evaporated. We have a feeling of our own inadequacy—we are lost—and for the moment our good resolution to make a rug has also taken to itself wings. We can see one thing only, that expanse of canvas, and although it is but a little mat of not more than six square feet we gaze on it as though it were the Sahara Desert. Such a feeling of mental blankness comes over us, mayhap, as that which attacked the author when she stood in Mount Auburn Cemetery gazing at the gray stone on which was the name of her favorite poet, Longfellow, and as she gazed she tried vainly to recall some quotation from one of the many poems which, until that moment, had been perfectly familiar to her. Try as she did she could not recall even the title of a single thing Longfellow had ever written. All she saw was the stone that marked the spot where his body reposed.

The illustration may be far fetched, but the blankness of intellect, the obliteration of memory, is something akin to the feelings an inexperienced rug maker has when she is at the

threshold of her ambitions. So it may be that if she is told to begin at the outside or edge of the rug and work towards the center, the suggestion may bring her from the temporary aberration of memory into which she allowed herself to lapse.

That little suggestion is worth much more than most workers realize, for working from the outside edge or hem of the rug has a tendency to keep the work smooth, whereas if great care is not taken to avoid puckering, a rug with the center design put in first and hooked entirely from the center to the outside edge may be bulky and full in places.

The outer row of hooking should start very close to the edge and the work proceed from right to left as in sewing a seam. Hold the strip of material firmly in the left hand under the rug. Push the hook down from the top with the right hand and catch material. Pull it up in a loop and release the hook. Take the next stitch on a line with design and as close to the loop stitch just finished as possible.

Novices are advised to make a rug with the loops uncut and the design will come out more distinctly if the loops are quite small rather than long.

When a few rows of edge or border are com-

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pleted the center motif may be hooked in and later the background worked in either in straight lines or swirls. These broken circles and semicircles add to the attractiveness of the rug and, as has been said before, they prevent the monotony of a flat background. Machine-made rugs rarely have swirled backgrounds, but this does not argue the point that straight line hooking in a background is not done with the regulation hand hook. Many women are inclined towards making their rugs as neatly and with as much precision as if they were sewing on a dainty garment, and such rug makers generally put their backgrounds in with meticulous exactness.

Practice and patience are the elements that spell success in rug making and when these are seasoned with good judgment and a love of the craft, each succeeding rug turned from the frame will be a little nicer and more workman-like than its predecessor.

## CHAPTER XI

### KINDS OF HOOKING

TO the uninitiated a hooked rug is a hooked rug, but those who have studied and analyzed the textures of hooked rugs from every section of the country where they are made find that there is a vast difference in the methods of hooking. I am almost tempted to say that there are as many varieties of hooking as there are of dahlias, and during a visit to the horticultural section of the New York State Fair I was told that there are seven thousand varieties of this beautiful flower. Perhaps that was an approximate estimate, but when looking at the countless specimens assembled under the one roof I could readily accept the statement as a fact, marvellous though it seemed. When I recall the rugs from Canada, New England, Pennsylvania, and the South and knowing as I do that each of these rugs has a characteristic texture that indicates its birthplace, and then multiply the big sections by innumerable individualistic touches that the various rug makers acquire as the hall mark of their

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wares, I feel that, like the dahlias, there are seven thousand varieties. We are further impressed with the thought that while there is enough difference to make seven thousand varieties there is yet sufficient similarity to make them all belong to one family.

There are big stitches and little stitches, coarse stitches and fine ones. There are long stitches and short stitches and stitches of medium length on the right side, and short on the wrong side, and vice versa. In brief, there are so many kinds of stitches and combinations that it were folly to attempt to classify them or to describe any except those of the most ordinary kinds of rug hooking.

Making a comparison that is really more apropos than the floral one, I might say that stitches and texture in hooked rugs are as numerous as are the stitches in sewing and embroidery. The kind of stitch varies in accordance with the weight and quality of the thread or material forming the stitches. In rug making a heavy, deep pile is formed by drawing the strips of material up on the right side, making long loops, and in like manner the tight, close texture of a rug is determined by rather short loops or stitches.

A type of rug that is very much admired



because of its soft texture is the clipped rug. In this the stitches are drawn up to the required length, sometimes a half inch or more, and the work is made very close, so that the flower or figure so treated stands out in high relief when the tops of the loops are trimmed off and the flower molded or raised above the surface of the background.

In making rugs with varying designs different kinds of stitches are used. For example, in the flowers and veinings of the leaves a short, tight stitch may be used, while in the body or background of the rug a looser stitch is permissible. Thus, we have occasionally found almost all the innumerable kinds of hooking in one rug, but such a rug is the exception rather than the rule.

Most rugs are made with a uniformity of stitch and when this is done it is not at all difficult to determine the classification, by the sense of touch. Beginners, however, must practice again and again before their work has that regular finished look that makes it a unit of its type. For this reason it is not entirely amiss to make the first rug mostly of cotton; that is, use cotton for borders and background and put wool into the flowers only.

I strongly suspect that some energetic rug

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worker whose hands are itching to get to work at her beautifully designed rug, may find herself wondering why instructions as to the thickness of the strips of material were not given before she was initiated into the kinds of stitches that may be used. Again, I may be pardoned for referring to the old-time methods of working when it is recalled that hereditary rug makers, those who come by the art naturally, because their mothers and grandmothers have practiced it, never prepare all their material before setting to work at the actual process of hooking. They pick up a bit of material, perhaps a fragment of a dress, and by the feel of it they know just how thick or wide to cut or tear the strips for the part of the rug on which they may be hooking. This process continues throughout the entire rug. The bits of cloth are generally kept right on top of the rug and like an artist reaching for the proper tube of paint, the master of rug making puts a firm hand on the exact piece she wishes to use, and her fingers tell her whether the goods shall be trimmed off to about an inch, or left much wider. This is something that I cannot teach any worker, for it is what has before been alluded to as "judgment," and be it known that a really well-made hooked rug has in its

depths that something which although unseen is yet present during the making, and which remains all through the long life of the rug. It is the individuality of the maker.

The component parts are of many kinds, yet they are blended and molded and formulated into a perfect whole by using the mind as well as the fingers and eyes. But do not be discouraged. Just as the average woman meets the emergencies that make up her daily life, some rough, some smooth, some flimsy and others harrowingly coarse, intermingled with the beautiful and the fine, so when she attacks her self-imposed task or pleasure of making a hooked rug, she will adjust the elements composing it, and out of the chaos of what before seemed like refuse and useless bits of rag there will emerge a thing of enduring satisfaction—a rug of her own making, a treasure trove.

## CHAPTER XII

### ROUND, OVAL, AND SEMICIRCULAR HOOKED RUGS

**I**N the chapter on materials for the foundation of rugs mention was made of putting in the hem, but since round, oval, and semicircular rugs are often made, another method will have to be devised for finishing them.

When a rug having a circular or curved edge is large enough to make it necessary to stretch it into a frame, the square or oblong material from which the curved rug is to be cut should be sewn into the frame with strong thread or cord leaving the edges unhemmed.

The rug will of course be designed just as any ordinary shaped square or oblong rug, and the outline of the round, oval, or curved side, if a Welcome mat is being made, will be marked in distinctly.

To preserve the shape, hook a row or two around the outer edge before attempting to make the center motif. Then later proceed as in ordinary hooking and when the rug is completed, take it from the frame and cut around the edge of the hooking, leaving an inch of the

plain material to turn back on to the wrong side. Baste this in place, using light-weight cotton, to prevent pulling out the border stitches and finish the raw edge with a piece of tape or old-fashioned skirt binding, which is easily adjusted to curves. Sew the binding down neatly, using the diagonal or ordinary hemming stitch. Such a finish is neat and durable.

Many otherwise careful workers spoil the appearance of their rugs by giving too little attention to the under side and the edge. Good hooking is even on the wrong side and the burlap is well covered. The edges should be hooked with quite heavy strands of material since they are the first to show hard wear.

Many antique rugs are bound around the edges, but this manner of finishing the edges was rarely on the original rug. When edges become frayed and the burlap breaks away, binding the edges prolongs the wear and if care is used in selecting a color that matches or harmonizes with the edge of the rug or its border, the little inconspicuous binding of satine or other firm fabric does not in the least detract from the appearance of the rug.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MAKING HOOKED RUGS FROM WOOL RAVELLINGS

ANY floor covering that is individually made stitch by stitch from selected material has good wearing qualities. We might say in broad terms that there is economy in using hand-made floor coverings of almost any kind—whether we refer to the splendid Oriental products or the simple rugs of our American ancestors. Economy was the watchword in the construction of these early rugs, even an economy of time, for they were made after the more strenuous household duties were accomplished. Scraps were utilized from the family rag bag, the long strips fashioned into the braided rugs, and the smaller pieces put into the quaint designs of the hooked rugs. No matter how small these pieces were they fitted in some little corner. The brilliant bits often brightened the heart of a flower or gave color to the jasperlike background of a home-made mat.

Materials are not so scarce today as when hand spinning and weaving made the household goods and clothes of our forebears things to

be kept and cared for while there was a thread of them left. Yet we in this present day may make beautiful rugs from scraps, have infinite pleasure in our economical task, and supreme satisfaction in the results. Hand-made floor coverings are an economy any way we look at the subject, but when an exceptionally fine type of wool rug may be made from wool ravellings it seems quite worth while to speak of the method of utilizing cast-off knitted garments.

This, then, is the story of a very old kind of hooked rug and yet it is today a rather unusual type of that lovely form of hand-made floor covering. All good housekeepers know that wool wears better than cotton when used continually under the feet of the family. Although many of the old-time hooked rugs, and modern ones also, are made entirely of cotton, others have a mixture of wool and cotton, but a really fine type of hooked rug is that made of wool exclusively. Many of these are what are called rag hooked rugs; that is, they are made by hooking cut or torn strips of material through a foundation as already described in the foregoing chapter.

The rugs described in this chapter, however, are not rag rugs, but rugs made from

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ravelled-out yarn, made in the same way that our rug makers of an earlier day used up the good parts of woollen socks, stockings, and mittens, and the once fashionable knitted wool leggings that were drawn over the shoes to protect the wearer from the winter's snows. Some such lovely old rugs are still tucked away in secluded neighborhoods, and what a delight it is to find them with their colors toned down from the brilliant reds and cobalt blues to the softness that melts into an harmonious unit. The wearing qualities of such rugs, if they have been protected from the ravages of moths, are so lasting that it is rare to find a ravelled wool rug with a hole in it. Best of all, such rugs may be made at home today with practically no expense, and we may have much pleasure in their construction.

Very naturally, then, the first essential is to secure a sufficient quantity of old sweaters and other knitted garments. Have them laundered at home, adding a few drops of olive oil to the light rinsing suds, and the garment will come out soft and pliable. Ravelling knitted and crocheted articles is easy when one can break the yarn as often as it is inclined to become kinky. As the wool is ravelled out it should be loosely rolled around the hand, and but a few



yards put into one of these small balls or hanks. Do not wind on big balls even if it is wool that is not to be dyed or it may twist in hooking.

When all the ravelling is accomplished and our work basket is filled with its multitude of loose balls of yarn, we are ready for the sorting, preparatory to dyeing the yarn. If the sweaters we have accumulated and ravelled out were of khaki color or gray, we might plan our rug so as to utilize a good part of the yarn without redyeing it, and the colors of the two branches of the service, tan and gray, make a pleasing combination when used together in a background.

The actual coloring or dyeing is something that may be done in various ways. Our ancestors obtained splendid and lasting results from the use of wild roots and berries, but there are now on the market inexpensive prepared dyes which give satisfaction when the directions on their labels are faithfully followed. We shall, therefore, allow our economical and efficient housekeeper to decide upon her favorite dye, and shall add this suggestion only—in this case be sure to get a dye intended for wool.

The process of coloring ravelled wool is simply to immerse the loosely wound balls or little skeins in the dye, and follow the directions

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as to time necessary for boiling when that is a part of the method of producing the required color. Here we see the advisability of having rather small and quite loose balls since it is essential that the dye penetrates to all the strands. Let me whisper a secret, however, about the lovely shaded effects that are so often found in old rugs. It is produced by uneven dyeing. Thus the prime color comes out in a variety of shades that when assembled harmoniously in a rug are delightful and seem to be a studied effect, when in truth such accidents as using a wool dye for cotton, or vice versa, may bring out tones and tints that could scarcely be duplicated by study and care. Here is a hint that may serve an ambitious rug maker when using wool and cotton or when making a rug from rags. This method is particularly effective when one plans a background that is mottled, or like jasper. Such backgrounds are put in in swirls and circles, instead of in straight lines.

The basic rules for making a hooked rug from rags may be used in making one from wool ravellings. That is, the frame, hook, and method of taking the stitches are identical in both kinds. The main difference lies in this fact, that in making a rug from wool ravellings

two or more strands of the yarn are picked up with the hook at every stitch.

In making a wool yarn rug quite a coarse, sharp-pointed needle or hook is used, and the hook part should be rather deeper than that used for wool or cotton rags in order to hold the strands of wool firmly.

### JUTE AND HEMP RUGS

Another kind of rug that is splendid for durability is that made from ravelled-out jute, canvas, or burlap. Jute is the fiber obtained from the inner bark of the jute plant, a species of linden originally grown in Asia, but now cultivated elsewhere also. It is used in the manufacture of bags and canvas. Hemp, a similar substance used in making cords, rope, and coarse cloth, serves the rug maker in the same way.

When jute or hemp bagging is to be used it should be cut into strips lengthwise of the fabric. The soft filling is then easily pulled out, leaving long, strong threads. Four or five of these threads are occasionally used together and hooked through in one loop. This kind of rug is appropriate for halls, porches, sun parlors, and door mats, but it is not really soft enough for bedroom or living-room use. This

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ravelled-out burlap is occasionally used in conjunction with wool and cotton, and its glossiness and firmness of texture add a pleasing touch to some of the handsomer, heavier rugs. Again, because of its strength and durability, this material is used for an outside edge or border on wool or cotton rugs.

Since I have gone to some length to explain the method of making hooked rugs from wool ravellings I will say here that the same kinds of rugs may be made from new wool yarn. The stores and art shops carry wool for the purpose, but such an expenditure is not advisable. The cost of a rug made from new yarn is excessive and the finished product is not so artistic as when ravelled-out wool yarn is used.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE THREE STRAND BRAIDED RUG

**B**EFORE taking up the subject of the method of construction of the various other types of American hand-made rugs, I wish to emphasize a few thoughts on the subject of materials. The idea back of a hand-made product is that of utility and economy combined to make an attractive rug. Therefore, the big point for construction is what materials does the would-be rug maker have at hand? Every home has its scrap bag of cast-offs—garments and household fabrics that have served their original purposes and are now ready to be converted into the much-to-be-desired hand-made rug. In addition to wearing apparel, sheets and pillow cases, blankets and towels are most adaptable for use in rug making, and since the hooked rug may be made from small pieces, short lengths and odds and ends of various kinds, distributed over a background of plain or variegated effect, one should plan to make economical use of the longer strips from these heavier, larger pieces of household textiles.

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No better use can be made of them than to select those that are suitable for a braided rug. In this form of floor covering both wool and cotton may be used alone or in combination. The very characteristically old-time braided rugs were composed largely of cotton materials. Naturally, the bits used in this type of rug must be of a rather firm and substantial character and for this reason old blue overalls, parts of them faded to almost a grayish azure and others deep with the indigo dye, had a very conspicuous place in the motif. The designer of these old-time rugs usually assorted her materials a moon or two before the start of the actual work, sorting the small pieces for hooked rugs and sewing together even the short pieces of the heavier material for use in braiding.

Let us turn back, then, to the old-time method and construct a braided rug out of cotton materials. Gather together our cast-off sheets, workaday dresses, gingham aprons, and overalls and we have the nucleus, indeed we have the entire material, for a very good old-fashioned rug. A braided rug should be substantial, heavy enough to lie flat and of sufficient size to cover the space to which it is assigned. One of the very early uses of this type of rug was before the old Franklin stoves and a rug about

one and one half yards in diameter is amply large to protect the carpet in such a spot.

Now preparing the rags for braided rugs is materially different from the preparation of rags for an old-fashioned rug made on a loom. In braiding a rug the strips may be torn the desired width, but they need not all be of uniform width, because when they are folded together the light-weight materials will necessarily have to be wider than the heavier cotton such as bed ticking or the drilling used for overalls.

In this, however, as in any other kind of needlework, a standard should be established. Let us say the pieces of heavy material are three inches wide, those of lighter weight would have to be cut perhaps four inches, and some a little wider. No absolutely hard-and-fast rule can be set down, but after a little practice the fingers will become accustomed to judging weights and it will be an easy matter to make the pieces so that when the three strands are braided together each is about the same weight.

In starting a rug of this character let us take for example two strands of heavy material cut from a pair of old blue overalls, and one strand of soft material—an old sheet dyed a light brown. The best results come from basting

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the three ends to be braided together and clamping them to the side of a kitchen table.

Select strands of varying lengths, two rather long and one short, let us say, to start with and then sew the pieces together as the braiding proceeds. In other words, do not sew a number of strips of material into one long one, as in the method of making the old-fashioned carpet rugs. If this were done the material would twist in braiding. Indeed, it is almost impossible to dexterously make a good piece of hand braiding from strips longer than a yard or a yard and a half. Add to the length of the strip being braided as the work proceeds, in this way picking up some long and some short strips.

The braiding process itself is quite easy since the short strip slips through and is more readily interwoven than the longer ones. Here again as in hooking, the individual method of workmanship will soon manifest itself. Many of the really nice old-time rugs were made without any effort to fold the material before braiding it, the strands being simply crushed in the hand with the edges turned in. Such a method makes a rather round braid, thick and somewhat resilient when new.

Continue the color scheme started, sewing brown to brown and blue to blue. This rug



will naturally have the blue color predominating, as the rug will be two-thirds blue and one-third brown. For the border use three strands of the blue and make two rows of the solid color. This is surrounded by a row of the two-color combination and three outside rows of the plain brown. This color combination makes a rug that blends nicely into natural colored wood floors.

Braiding the strands is simply laying the foundation of our work and whether we make a rug or a basket or a ruffle from our braiding depends entirely upon our manipulation of the work. It is not at all necessary to braid the entire number of yards required to make a rug before starting to sew them together.

Since the rug in question is a round one, let us take the end of the braiding which was first fastened to the table, as our starting point, and lay the braid flat on the table upside down. When braiding care must be taken to keep the right side up, for although the under or lower side of the braid should be neat, the side next the worker is essentially smoother and more carefully executed.

The braiding process is the same as that used in braiding the hair; that is, weaving up and down from side to side. Starting with the end

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that was first fastened to the table, place the right side down and wrap the braid around the end, working from the center to the circumference of the rug. Patience and the exercise of care and judgment are essential in keeping the rug flat, but if it is made on a table there is no reason why anything but a rug should result from the worker's efforts.

There is one element, however, that is almost magical in keeping a rug flat when sewing it over and over, and that is to place the needle directly across the two pieces of cloth—thus making the stitch diagonal. When this is observed there is no tendency to pucker or full.

A needle of sufficient size to thread easily number eight or ten or twelve spool cotton, or linen thread of about the same weight as thread in those numbers, should be used. The weight of the thread should depend, of course, upon the coarseness of the goods being used. As a general rule number ten is very satisfactory and cotton thread is easier to work with than linen because the fibers do not pull apart. A double thread, waxed, is better than a single, and one sews easier with a length of one-half to three-quarters of a yard than with a longer thread. Use dark or light thread according to the color scheme.

The old-fashioned method of sewing carpet rags was to lay the end of the strip that was being added on top of the strip attached to the ball on which the yards and yards of sewn rags were wound. The ends lapped from a half to three-quarters of an inch, depending on the weight and width of the strips, and a running stitch through the center joined the pieces securely. That is, they were secure if the thread was fastened by several back stitches taken neatly and ending by throwing the thread over the needle making a loop or knot that grandma and her cohorts considered the one and only method of sewing carpet rags.

This same method is as good today as in times past and carpet rags sewn by this formula will stay nice and flat when woven. But braided rugs, as has been explained, are not made from rags wound on balls. Moreover, the process of braiding is such that the raw ends of the strips must not show. Hence we shall sew our rags as we braid the strands by a plain seam, putting the right sides of the goods together, and sewing neatly and with a weight of thread suitable to the goods. Fasten the thread firmly as grandma did when sewing her carpet rags, and let the work go gaily on.

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### FIVE AND SEVEN STRAND BRAIDING

The process of braiding five and seven strands is simply the interweaving of one strand up and down in the same way as three strand braiding, but the turn at the edges should be flat. The process of sewing the wider strips of braiding is the same as when three strands are used.

Besides the round and oval shapes, some makers sew their braided pieces into circles and join them, but such rugs are neither so easy to make nor so practical as the simpler shapes.

Another shape that is possible when a large braided rug is desired is to make the center oval and then construct a pair of long oval rugs, sewing them on at the sides as "wings." A unique rug is of seven strand braiding with the center strip of the wings made by weaving fourteen strands into a long flat strip. This rug may be made by combining a black border with a variegated center.

## CHAPTER XV

### WOVEN RUGS AND RAG CARPETS

**H**AND-WOVEN fabrics are today in great demand and with this revival of interest in loom products, very naturally we have with us again our old-fashioned woven rag carpets. Unlike hooked rugs which are most satisfactory when made from the original formula, many modern woven rag carpets are lovelier and better than those made by our ancestors.

But before discussing relative merits of old versus new let us turn back to grandma's days and analyze a few of the loomed strips of carpet that were stretched lengthwise of the room, their edges overlapping instead of being sewn together. Thus when one breadth became worn it was transferred to a more sheltered space under a couch or other large piece of furniture. Rag carpet, as this woven floor covering was called, generally had one or two double or triple threads of wool chain or warp forming brilliant red, green, blue, or orange stripes a few inches from the edges of the strip. Most carpet was woven a yard wide although

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some looms were large enough to weave strips a yard and a quarter wide. Since the work was usually done by the women folks, the labor involved in shifting the implement carrying the rag woof or filling was too heavy if a piece wider than thirty-six inches were attempted.

It is not the purpose of this book to enter into an explanation of the mechanism or manipulation of the looms that were used in other years or the more modern and lighter weight looms that are on the market today. Woven carpets are like other loom-constructed fabrics. In the somewhat primitive forms looms were a sort of harness on which the chain or warp—the lengthwise running threads of the fabric—were strung, and the woof or crosswise threads woven or interlaced through these lengthwise strands, one up the next down, and so on across the width of the piece being constructed. In carpet weaving the loom was first threaded with the chain or warp—a soft twine manufactured for the purpose—and then the carpet rags previously sewn into strips many yards long were threaded into a shuttle and the little instrument was dexterously drawn or thrown as it was called. When the carpet rag was interlaced or woven into the warp, one thread up and the other down, all through the process, it was then

knocked in by shifting the set of teeth in the loom so as to push up the line of woof close to the preceding row. This with variations and elaborations was the loom on which rag carpets were woven.

The rags for old-time woven carpets were cut or torn in strips of from a half inch in width to three times that width when a heavy serviceable carpet was to be made. In sewing the rags, the ends were placed together overlapping a good half inch, then the two inner edges folded together in the center and sewn with strong cotton or linen thread by a running stitch.

Some carpet rags were sewn together in a hit-and-miss way with no attempt to keep colors separate, and when woven these made a mottled background for the gay wool stripes that ran a riot of color from end to end. Other designers of woven carpets sewed their rags with five or six yards of similar or dark-colored materials alternating with the same length of lighter colored rag strips, and when these were woven they gave a cross-stripe effect of five or six strands alike.

Naturally as in most other woven fabrics, the weight and worth depend upon the number of chain or warp strands to the inch. Loose, flimsy

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sible in these hand-woven carpets that our old-time rug weavers never thought of attempting, and one wonders why this is so. They found ways of expressing themselves through the medium of hooked rugs, but ploddingly they proceeded with weaving rag carpets that were mongrel, mostly. Naturally there were exceptions, among them the gorgeously brilliant wool warp carpet worthy of a futurist in color.

Here we have rich reds running the scale to deep mahogany, brown, and greens that tone down to grays. This particular carpet is not made from rags but with a filler of hemp. This type of woven carpet was known in some localities, particularly among the Pennsylvania Dutch, as *Gerthen* carpet. It has an Indian flavor and would be delightful in a camp or rural lodge where its brightness would not tire us by being with us always.

There are many possibilities and much pleasure as well in experimentation with color combinations in weaving carpets. They cannot be set down here as rules, for it has been truly said that color is felt. It is not a theory, it is experience, but it seems appropriate to say a few sentences here in reference to color—as a whole. To understand the subject one must be a student and an experimental worker.



While writing this book it was my good fortune to hear an authority on color, Mr. Ralph Pratt of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, speak on the subject of the spectrum, and the words I pass on as suggestions only, are:

"Blue is cool—or cold. Green, Nature's mantle, is restful. Violet is shadowy and mysterious. Red symbolizes life and vigor—passion—heat—and even revolution, and yellow is pure light."

Volumes, libraries indeed, are devoted to this subject and our rug weaver must work out her own idea of beauty along her own lines. And here, as in the instructions about making hooked rugs, let me again emphasize the thought: Make your textile beautiful for yourself. You will be sure, then, that if you cannot please every one who may see it you have pleased the one most vital to its success—you—your own self.

#### KNITTED RUGS

This is not a lesson in the manipulation of a set of knitting needles. It is presupposed that the woman who undertakes to knit a rug knows the simple stitches that are necessary in making a smooth, firm, knitted fabric. If the reader would like to make a knitted rug she must

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first learn to knit. Then she may sew her strips of rags as for woven carpet and roll them on balls and proceed to make her rug, using her ingenuity in fashioning it well and blending colors harmoniously. Knitted rugs may be round, oval, square, or oblong.

Round or cart-wheel rugs are made by knitting a circular mat about six inches in circumference. Then a piece three or four inches wide is made and the outer edge widened so that it lies flat when sewn around the circular center piece. The next row may be five or six inches wide, keeping a regular scale of increase of two or three inches until the rug reaches the required dimensions.

Square or oblong rugs are made in strips and permit of many color combinations. Such rugs are nice for bathrooms, when made of cotton, as they launder well.

Knitted edges were occasionally put on hooked rugs. One example shows a dull green field on which a frisky horse cavorts, and the knitted border shows the basic colors of the rug.

### CROCHETED RUGS

I shall not devote much space to crocheting rugs for the reason that the process is an ex-

tremely simple one. Some of our ancestral rug makers used the crochet hook to make a lace border for their hooked rugs. Such a one is shown in Plate XVI. In this case the twine used in making the lace was dyed a soft rosy hue to blend harmoniously with the predominant colors in the rug.

Those experienced in the use of the crochet needle can formulate a variety of designs in the rugs they undertake from following patterns illustrated in any book on crochet work. Care must be taken to sew the rags neatly and to join them in exactly the right place or an uneven pattern will result.

Crocheted rugs are suitable for porches, bathrooms, and bedrooms.

A very durable kind of rug is made by crocheting wool rags over a rope.

#### FUR RUGS

Rugs made from fur are not designed for floor coverings but for wall hangings and the one illustrated is an elaborate piece of work made from many pieces of different kinds of fur. Such a rug naturally would not be attempted by the novice in handling fur, but it is shown as an example of what the experienced worker may accomplish with scraps of fur.

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Our early fur trappers' homes were adorned with some of these patched fur rugs of simple design. The untrained rug maker of today may have a hint for utilizing the accumulation of scraps of furs that may be interesting, but she will hardly attempt anything very elaborate.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE RUG MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

Now that I come to the final chapter I hear a multitude of intelligent voices asking "who shall continue the revival of the art of American hand-made rugs?" Naturally the same type of home-loving housewives who originally made rugs will continue to do so, and in addition there are many folks in cities and towns who will feel the urge to leave this kind of handwork to posterity. I have found, too, that active, alert women who direct reconstruction work in institutions see in these little mats the possibility for constructive, blessed work among those who because of physical or mental injury need employment. Many of those who give their time, their intelligence, and their energy to reconstruction work have come to me asking for a book that tells how real hooked rugs are made by hand.

Conscientiously I have tried to cover even seemingly patent facts about rug making in order that dear souls, who have within them all the desire to dare and do that is flowing

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through the veins of the physically and mentally sound, might not stumble or become discouraged for lack of definite instructions. I have tried to show how the work may be made a joy, and I leave those who are interested to carry out the work in their own way.

In the making of woven rugs and carpets and in the knitted and crocheted varieties some of the best examples of workmanship I have seen were made by the sightless. All institutions giving work to the blind include weaving, and most of them produce both crocheted and knitted rugs as well.

There is joy in work; and to create a thing of beauty ourselves or to help others to express their ideas of the things that are to them lovely and of good repute is, to put it mildly, soul satisfying.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Out of darkness cometh light, out of chaos cometh order, after sorrow cometh joy.*

## ADDENDA

WHEN I wrote the book, I had a very sincere desire to be helpful to those who liked hooked rugs well enough to wish to possess them, either through purchasing those others had made, or by constructing them with their own hands. Forecast—our intentions—and our realizations are two distinct and sometimes far removed things; but in adding this chapter to **HOOKE**  
**RUGS AND HOW TO MAKE THEM**, I am most happy to state that any intention I had about the use of the book has been more than realized.

I wish it were possible to even refer briefly to some of the letters that have come to me from those who have followed the directions as to the use and making of hooked rugs. I shall not try to tell my readers what pleasant things those who use hooked rugs have said, but pass immediately to the practical side of how to make hooked rugs.

Shortly after the book was published I was broadcasting on the subject, and a mature man, lying on his bed in a home for incurables asked for an ear receiver to listen in. When the series

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of talks was completed, he told his teacher of his desire to make a hooked rug himself, and asked her to get him some materials.

Realizing that Captain Nils, whose back was broken in a fall on his ship, had not been able to sit up for twelve years, the teacher hesitated, but answered, "I'd start with a small mat, one that is not too heavy to handle, say one for a stool cover!"

"Such a trifling thing would be as useless as I feel I have been all these dozen years since my back was broken. No, I want to make a real rug, one folks would like and could use. I've lain here useless long enough—I'm going to do something. I'm going to make a real hooked rug, and I'm going to put bright colors into it like those in the dresses of the women back home in Norway."

"Fine!" said the teacher, but she later told me that she referred to the spirit the man manifested and that she did not believe he could handle a hooked rug of any considerable size. She found some materials for him, and nothing would please him for design except a simulated "Tree of Life." You see hope had entered his heart, and hope inspires, hope cures heart-aches, and makes one almost oblivious to suffering and handicaps.



By a supreme effort Captain Nils worked on, later being propped up in a reclining chair as his fingers fashioned the rug. It took him more than a year to finish it, but it was a work of art because it was the child of his dreams, and into its blues was the same indescribable mingling of tones and tints that are found in Watts' "Hope," and the gold of the sunshine flecked with amber shadows that reflected the glow of a glorious sunset. So beautiful was it that it was placed in the window of a shop on Madison Avenue, New York, and later sold to a woman of taste and means. That was Captain Nils' first rug. He has made others since, and all are good rugs, because their making gave not only occupation but joy as well. If "he who sweeps a room to the glory of God, makes both that and the action fine," this paralyzed man and his rug are superb—both of them.

Nor is it in hospitals, alone, that hooked rug making is giving employment to men and women. All over our country, from the shores of the stormy Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico and to the Pacific Ocean, people in groups and singly are making this old-time-new-time floor covering.

Among my happiest recollections is the pleasure I saw reflected in the eyes of rural folks as

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well as urban, who listened to my story of hooked rugs at various state and county fairs. At Memphis, Tennessee, the school teachers from the rural districts, some of them colored women, were delighted to know that they could utilize spare time and old materials in making rugs for themselves and for sale. I have seen a number of rugs made by these women, and all reflect credit to their skill both as to design and workmanship. Farm Bureaus are taking up the making of hooked rugs and community gatherings sometimes fashion a large rug which when put on the market brings a high price.

City folks too, are hooking rugs. The wife of a famous New York physician has a number of soft-toned new hooked rugs on her floor.

"My husband and I made them last winter while we were listening to the radio. We thought they would be nice to leave to the children when we are through with them, and then, too, they have the pieces from our old clothes in them—sort of memory pieces, you know."

Perhaps the most encouragement I have received has come from the older folks, the women whose hands have done their more than allotted share of toil, but who refuse to be put into retirement. One of my own precious possessions

is a small mat made by a dear soul seventy-five years young, who had never seen a hooked rug, but who followed directions in this book, and sent the first rug to me for my criticism. I bought it, not because of the age and courage of the maker, but because it embodies in its small surface of about six square feet, those elements which I consider essential in a good hooked rug. Let me close by saying what they are:

First, the rug is made on good foundation burlap, sturdy, but not too heavy. Second it is individually designed and has rather non-descript flowers, but they are bright and well blended. There are two or three shades of each basic color, and that gives harmony to the finished picture. The workmanship is good—not too many stitches to the square inch, which incidentally is one of the errors into which most beginners fall. They work too hard, and their rugs become bulky and stiff.

#### HOOKED RUGS FOR MODERN HOMES

Modernism with its angles and bizarre effects in floor coverings has not eliminated the use of hooked rugs. While this form of carpet is essentially more connected with antique or Victorian furnishing, than with the extremes of new art,

## 160 Hooked Rugs and How to Make Them

there is no reason why those who like futuristic designs should not create hooked rugs to correspond with their settings. Indeed several groups of workers are making modernistic hooked rugs to the exclusion of all other types. This kind of rug, however, should be made close and smooth, with nothing of shagginess or informality about it; and it follows that exceedingly good hooking, that is short, close stitches, left in loops, and not clipped, is necessary to the successful modernistic hooked rug.

### COPYING HOOKED RUGS

In bringing out this new edition of **HOOKED RUGS AND HOW TO MAKE THEM**, my first idea was to insert an entirely new set of illustrations, but upon reflection, that would stimulate the spirit of copying, and to my mind, as I have so often repeated in these pages, the nice hooked rug, the hooked rug that commands and holds attention, is the individual expression of its maker's idea of symmetry and beauty. Let me ask of those who use the book, that they consider the illustrations as examples only, and not for copying. If the design is admired, vary it slightly, and thus you will have something that your own mind conceived—as well as the thing fashioned by your own hands and from

your own materials. Like the doctor's wife, make your next hooked rug, and all your hooked rugs, memories of pleasant people, of kin folks, and of your own joy in creating something that is individual.



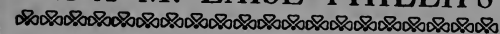


# *Hooked Rugs and How to Make Them*

*New Edition with New Material*

—BY—

ANNA M. LAISE PHILLIPS



Mrs. Phillips says: "I know of no other handicraft that has in it so much of human interest, so much of the personal equation, as that of American handmade rugs."

She tells in sympathetic, entertaining style how she first became interested in hooked rugs, and what she discovered of the history and romance of the craft from its beginnings in Scotland and America.

Then come very practical chapters on how to make the rugs. Mrs. Phillips discusses the materials used for foundation and for the design, tells how to mark in the design, what kind of frames and hooks are best to use, and finally describes hooking in the design. Her directions and explanations are so clear and so simply expressed as to offer no difficulty, even for the novice. Two final chapters are devoted to woven rugs, braided, knitted and crocheted rugs.

The entire book will be of interest not only to those who aspire to make rugs but to all who admire this old-time art.

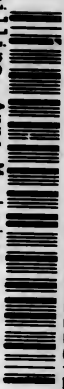


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